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APR.
6th
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A FUTURE WITH PEACE OF MIND

Photo courtesy of the authors of *Black Beauty*, first novel

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On the front lines of the fight against R. Khan, currently in custody in the South Valley, check out the stunning photos of the war-torn streets of Pakistan.



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MAIL BAG



'The Conservative approach to gang violence takes a leaf out of the discredited U.S. playbook'

PLEASE, GO WEST

IT WOULD BE A shame to say that the crime in Saskatoon has risen so far above the national average, as you reported in "The most dangerous cities in Canada" (National, March 16). Your report points out the real problems we are experiencing with home neighbourhood poverty, gangs, crime and at-risk youth. With growing population and a robust economy come environmental challenges regarding education, crime and prevention. Hopefully future articles will shed the positive steps many agencies are taking to address these needs. It would also be worthwhile to look at the exemplary police in Saskatoon Police Service in doing to enhance our community and get criminals off the street. Because of these initiatives, it will only take for my family and me to enjoy life in Saskatoon.

Ed Carleton, Saskatoon

few years, there is a 70-90 chance the murders may have been contained by easterners J.A. Armstrong, Lethbridge, Alta.

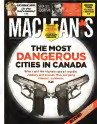
BEATING THE GANGS

CRIMINAL JUSTICE EXPERT Michael Cherchule, interviewed in your story on gangland violence ("How to fight the gangs," National, March 16), is dead-end in his analysis of the drugs crime nexus and how it spills onto the streets. Sadly, the Conservatives' approach to gang violence is taking another leaf out of an already discredited playbook, one which we have seen fail in

YOUR QUOTE "A recent analysis of freedom movement in B.C." that urges Canada to "require import markings on drugs brought into the country to track and control foreign trafficking." What the article does not tell us is that we have this system already in place. It is called a serial number and manufacturer name, and both are stamped on all guns.

Harold Bhan, Vancouver

IMAGINE if the \$2 billion that the Liberal government spent on creating the gun registry had instead been spent on the youth before the gangs started to recruit them: we'd have hockey rinks, basketball courts, community centres. Gun laws only affect law-abiding people. Criminals don't care about laws. Another fool goes on to not figure out how to stop the dealers that the police know are circumventing the law, and spend some of the registry money on the at-risk youth. Gordon Callings, Oxford Mills, Ont.



HOW TO BEAT THE gangs, you ask? Legalize marijuana. It's a solution being considered at the upcoming Liberal convention in Vancouver. Both the Green party and the Premier Institute support legalization. Our B.C. had paid \$6 billion to \$8 billion annually into the pockets of organized criminals, who launder through real estate deals, vehicles, casinos and even lawyers. California is considering legalizing bud and taxing it in order to balance its books. Canada could do the reasonable thing and legalize it to knock the suits out from underneath organized crime and reap the savings in lives and quality of life.

Raeen Kerey, Langley, B.C.

THE PARENT TRAP
THANKS SO MUCH for the most insightful article with psychologist and teen expert Michael Bradley (November, March 16). I'm one of the few who think that our teens need to have choices, need to be given the responsibility lessons, and that being their friends at that most crucial time does not have to mean that we drink with them. My children have a schedule for who does the dishes and scrubs the toilet, and despite the whining, they do it. Why not train us of us understand that it is possible to be a loving parent and perhaps listen?

Mary-Joanne, Mississauga, Ont.

BLOGS

ANDREW COYNE
The time has surely come to reassess the CBC model as a full-service flagship broadcaster. It makes no sense to arm all these stations with all the tools on the shelf where they can be so easily avoided. www.cbc.ca/coyne

PAUL WELLS
I wonder whether there is any upside at all to being the PM in the next couple of years. Either Harper will make a wreck of his own finances or lightbeef will make a wreck of Harper's finances. www.cbc.ca/wells

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WEB POLL RESULTS

Should the federal government increase the amount of funding it gives to the CBC?



THIS WEEK'S POLL: maclean.ca/vot

Should the federal government increase the amount of funding it gives to the CBC?

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STAY AWAY FROM CANAGAN - it's dangerous!

STAY AWAY FROM CANAGAN. It's dangerous! The more Canada Maclean's is virtually broadcasting from the readings with such an outrageously negative cover. Surely your design department can illustrate the subject matter without using such stark imagery, sending out shock waves that will no doubt hit our senior brain.

Peter A. Satterfield, Berlin, Ont.

YOUR CHART of crime scores had the head line "Still the Wild West," referring to the western Canadian cities that take some of the top 10 spots for highest murder rate. I also noted that seven out of the top 30 cities are in the West. What was your headline bias in this case? Since there has been migration to the western provinces from the East over the last

the U.S. in every important respect. We're not going to pursue a weapon prohibition, but we'll have to raise our tolerance for the violence that ensues.

Chris Jones, Carleton Place, Ont.

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90 GANGSTERS have "top legal talent paid for with drug money," you write. Defense lawyers for these gangsters are living off the proceeds of crime, which is a legal strategy, especially when most middle class Canadians can't afford quality—or any—legal costs when needed. Any parliament considering how to diminish criminal activity should use the idea of removing elite legal services with the objective of making more difficult for lawyers to work with gangsters, especially those who don't have lawfully earned money to pay for legal counsel.

Brian V. Ralph, Toronto



'I'm disappointed the reaction to M.I.A.'s courage was to tell her to sit down and shut up'

AS A 16 YEAR OLD girl, I was incredulous that the parenting techniques described by Michael Bentley are not strict at all, in fact, they're the opposite. Most teens who are making poor choices have parents who simply have no intention of giving their child the "short leash" (Of the tens I know who behave badly, their parents are not involved, or the teens are annoying what they see their parents do). The problem is not the behavior of the teenagers, as the uninvolved parents simply don't seem enough to set rules and boundaries. We cannot logically expect kids to be raised right if they must raise themselves.

Jessica Arnold, Edmonton

MODERATE CONSUMPTION of alcohol by adolescents does not cause alcoholism or brain damage. A body of research indicates that cultures where young people are more drunk in alcohol at a relatively young age is associated with alcoholism later in life. More research on adolescents shows that cultures where young people begin to drink at earlier and other dangerous settings. Also, research at Wake Forest University and John Moores University in Liverpool has revealed that young people who are given alcohol by their parents at home are significantly less likely to drink or binge drink outside the home.

Jim Gleason, Grange, Ohio

DARWINIAN DEMOCRACY

THANK YOU for your well balanced, thoughtful article "The end of democracy?" (World, March 6). Democracy, like capitalism, is founded on the evolutionary idea of "survival of the fittest." Let ideas fight it out like products and species. Democracy is the closest to approach nature's own proven way of doing things. Democracy will survive because it is the most realistic, stable and competitive effective system. The rejection of the authoritarian government is the dying backdoor against the challenge of globalism and the exponentially growing flood of information. Democracies just happen to be better suited to meet these challenges and support these things. Democracies are not used or able to find the advance of human progress, their agenda is to reverse it.

Bob Ansel, Calgary

IF THE END OF DEMOCRACY is near, the so-called free West has one to blame but itself.

The last two decades have been marked by unbridled material gains and unbridled access of advanced, all this progress, however, is without any corresponding moral and social progress. This is due to liberalism, moral relativism, political correctness and socialism. The more material this new world becomes, the greater will be the need for good old fashioned national security, and nationalism itself. The roughly since 1980. The West will have become too soft to defend itself against a tougher and more advanced communism in Russia or the Middle East. James Alexander, Papineau, Vancouver

DEFINING JIHAD

THE DEFINITION of jihad placed by the famous Susan Muhammad presented in her article "In deprecation a jihad?" (World, Feb. 9). As a Muslim, I agree with the definition of jihad given in the article, along with the idea that many terrorists use jihad as their reason to terrorize. However, I did not agree with the use of the term jihad to describe a terrorist. Terrorists are simply terrorists, not jihadists. A jihad is someone who struggles either internally, or against others, or externally, when trying to defend oneself or his/her. As a Muslim, I am deeply disturbed by the situation Islam has been put in by the terrorist label. I wish to see this point better to indicate all the false claims and stereotypes associated with Islam, its teachings, its philosophy and its followers.

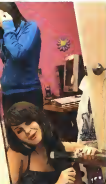
Laila Majed, Calgary

M.I.A.'s MOXIE

I'M HEAVILY DISAPPOINTED that the public reaction to M.I.A.'s courage and independence is to essentially tell her to sit down and shut up (Milling, March 16). M.I.A. is a person who has not only shown amazing creativity and originality in her art, but also courage in her convictions and the strength

to stand up and speak out against injustices in the world. As a woman, she is fully capable of making decisions on how to behave while pregnant, similarly, she is allowed to speak out on whatever issues she sees fit. Disagree with her perspective if you like, but do not tell her to "back to music" or suggest an "intervention" for her baby.

Peggy Cooke, Fredericton, N.B.



"The problem isn't taxes, it's the parents who won't let their kids..."

STEYN'S BACK!

CONGRATULATIONS on the return of Mark Steyn to your pages ("Them? Such a quiet nation now," Opinions, March 16). Right and wrong, often simultaneously, Steyn is returning, though personally, and a welcome weekly grating of the great Canadian identity and self-image. He's the sound for a long time to come.

Andy Clark, Vancouver, Ont.

IN HIS COLUMN, Mark Steyn says, "You remember Lord Nelson at Trafalgar? He told the telescope over his eye-patch and said 'see no ships.'" This incident in Nelson's life occurred during the battle of Copenhagen

in 1801. Steyn's column is both amusing, and in many cases spot on, but I suspect he took his own headline too literally. Facts being what they are, he chose to ignore at least this one.

Murray Byrne, Newmarket, Ont.

PERHAPS QUEBEC should change an income tax from "Je me souviens" to "Je vous oublie."

Patricia Sabourin, CapSable, B.C.

SMOKE AND MONEY

YOU TELL US that in New Brunswick, "Dying stores morph into smoke shops" (National, March 16). A person who chooses to own a store very quickly notices that cigarettes are the most sold items. It makes perfect sense, from a business point of view, to apply for a license to sell items that are bestsellers. Cigarettes are a legal commodity. Because the criminal justice, and another honest taxpayer's businesses can make his own cigarette purchases.

Victoria Hansen, Guelph, Ont.

SAVE IT FOR SOMEONE ELSE

IN HIS COLUMN, "What we can learn from the pension meltdown" (Opinion, March 16), Andrew Coyne recommends that the management of the "funded savings" in the GPP and CPP be left in the individual hands of the ultimate recipients. However, he does not explain why individual investor capabilities are superior to those of the administrators of the government plans. How would individual investors manage their nest eggs? By putting it all in bonds and making it vulnerable to defaults and loss of principal if interest rates go up? By using a mix of stocks and bonds based on emotions or perhaps expert advice? After all, the wisdom of the financial and equity markets seems to be well known when it comes to the way to go, they could put it all in a balanced mutual fund, the average of which returned about 8 percent in 2006, slightly worse than CPP.

Peter Menckes, Kingston, Ont.

TAKE THIS TO THE BANK

IT WAS EXHAUSTING to read in your February 28th edition (Business, March 16) a reference to "fat cat bankers" raking in all those bank profits. The Canadian banks are publicly traded companies. Stocks and dividends benefit all many Canadians—those who have taken in pension funds, mutual funds, own bank stocks, and hundreds of thousands of Canadians who are employees. Canadian law prohibits any one individual or group from gaining any undue financial interest in the Big Five. They are competitive and keep each other in line. Our

banks are often rated as top companies to work for by independent publications and donate a good deal to charity. They also pay their fair share of income tax, which supports our social programs. Bank busting has become big but is very misinformed. Sweet justice may be in order for how our well-regulated banks haven't taken the path of U.S. banks into insolvent with policies of greed and recklessness.

Annabelle Vermeer, Port Alberni, B.C.

WE CAN DREAM, CAN'T WE?

WHILE WE WAIT CONSUMERS can take credit for amazing savings along our streets, eye-blinking happy prices, high property prices, low interest and Olympic costs miraculously hourly, we can't really dream, as it was implied in your Newsmakers item "American horror Canadian rosters," March 16, that the athletes in the band "Heart are Vancouver's Alan and Nancy Wilson." True, they played the club circuit here in the mid '70s while writing and recording their debut album Dreamboat Annie, but they were all Seattleites who came north when the guitar player's brother and Andy's brother fled his conception notice. Once Jimmy Carter issued his draft notice in January 1977, they were all fast to home, where they ultimately sold 30 million records. We got Prime

John P. McLaughlin, Maple Ridge, B.C.

CORRECTION: A Privacy Council investigation found no evidence that Les Noëlle, then chief of staff to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, disclosed information to the media concerning Barack Obama's campaign last year. Interest information appeared in a column in our March 6 edition. Maclean's regrets the error.

IN PASSING

Jack Lawrence, 96, passed. Although he had no formal training, he wrote lyrics that became classics in pop music's canon. He passed after a long battle with Parkinson's disease. He was born in 1910, and he wrote lyrics for many of the songs that defined the sound of the 1950s and 1960s. He was a pioneer in the field of songwriting, and his work has inspired many other writers. He was a true pioneer in the field of songwriting, and his work has inspired many other writers.

Natasha Richardson, 48, actress. A veteran of 10 films and TV series such as *Star and the City*, she was a *Teen* award for a revival of *Calcutta*. The daughter of actress Vanessa Redgrave, she was married to Liam Neeson. At age four she made her film debut with her mother in *Charger of the Light Brigade*.

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A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF JASON KENNEY

The immigration minister was busier than the finance minister. He cut funding to the Canadian Arab Federation, a group that supports Hamas and Hezbollah, announced that all newcomers will be required to speak English or French before becoming citizens, and vowed to re-examine the "Live-in Caregiver Program" and regulations that foreign nurses are being exploited. Kenney also had to explain why George Galloway, the anti-war British MP, is barred from Canada.

Good news

Small is beautiful

Environmentalists were quick to praise this week's launch of India's 12,000 "people's cars"—the Tata Nano. Thousands of the ultra-cheap vehicles are expected to be snapped up by eager buyers, and as the process boosts greenhouse gas emissions in India's already polluted cities. But the Nano will also do for India what it's doing for emerging markets: what Ford's Model T did for North America: bring an affordable car to where it's needed. Car ownership is a luxury that North Americans have enjoyed for decades, and India has a very long way to go before its per capita emissions come close to matching ours. Far from an environmental disaster, the Nano is a small breakthrough that will help raise the quality of life for millions of people.

Be nice

Science has confirmed what your mother always said: kindness pays off in the end. Researchers at North Carolina State University found that project managers who treated their performers from their teams when they are honest, courteous and respectful. A separate study out of England concluded that cows treated with affection—given names, for example, or a comfortable place to sleep—produced 8% more gallons of milk per year. Still not convinced that your cat was right? Let another scientist tell you: work links to happy workers in an elevated kind of heart attack. Have a nice day.

Watershed

Days after students at the University of Winnipeg were told that the sale of bottled water, school administrators announced they'd banned it. In a Canadian first, all plastic water bottles will dis-

appear from campus cafeterias and vending machines. Now if only the rest of the country would take a closer look at its water consumption. A new study says the average Canadian uses an "alarming" amount—129 litres a day, to be exact—which is second only to the U.S. and more than twice as much as the average European.

Stay west, young man

Wes, 18, said he was too shy to be a Mormon. His father, who was a member of the church, said he was too shy to be a Mormon.

FACE OF THE WEEK



ON THE HOT SEAT: As the economy falters, U.S. President Barack Obama wields his face during a town hall meeting in California.

"crisis" levels, and the province's two largest cities, Saskatoon and Regina, finished first and third respectively in the list of the country's most dangerous cities. Sadly, such problems are typical of most towns and cities in the world. The local politicians know it. Which is why they're desperate for their latest plan to attract university graduates with a \$10,000 cheque-in exchange for a promise to work around for seven years. Saskatchewan doesn't need more temporary workers; it needs a new generation of qualified workers who will go home and stay west.

Bad news

Cold-blooded

Public outcry has forced the Israel Defense Forces to launch a national investigation of its conduct during the recent Gaza war. According to Israeli soldiers' accounts published in an Israeli newspaper, the rules of engagement led them to kill innocent civilians, including unarmed women and children. Adding to the factor are revelations that basic training graduates are handed firearms at the end of their training. One of them graduated a child in the custody of a wife.

acts, including fur and blubber oil, and even Vladimir Putin has jumped on the anti-dabbling bandwagon. The Russian president says his country will stop the spring call in the northern White Sea because killing baby seals is a "bloody trade." Possessing journalists and political dissidents is still okay, though.

Peace postponed

The Delta Force was banned from entering South Africa after being denied a visa to attend a peace conference there. The reason? The government is worried that the terrorist leader, and his crew of Tibetan anti-industry will overthrow the 1810 World Cup soccer tournament. Ironically, the conference was meant to highlight ways in which the game can promote peace, and was even supported by one of the country's professional soccer leagues. The ban prompted Nobel Peace Prize winners Desmond Tutu and FW de Klerk, among others, to postpone the conference. Not surprisingly, one organization did praise South Africa for an decision: China's foreign ministry.

March Sadness

During the Great Depression, sport was the Great Distraction. That one word, it's more like the Great Disappointment. In these uncertain economic times, when people are especially desperate for diversion, the sports season has been just as dismal as the stock markets. The World Baseball Classic was a dud (sorry, Japan), the first weekend of March Madness was woefully short on upsets and buzzer beats, and the much hyped return of Tiger Woods has been more pain than joy. When do the NHL playoffs begin? Not soon enough. ■

CANADA'S ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN

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Home renovation tax credit

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CANADIAN SOLDIERS SLAMMED, SUDOKU SOLVED, LETTERMAN THE LAST OF THE 'REAL GUNSINGERS'

NEWSMAKERS

Sure, make fun of the nice guy

Greg Gutfeld, host of Fox News' unpopular comedy that show *Red Eye*, joked that Canadian soldiers sent off from Kandahar do yoga and stroll on the beach, adding "I didn't even know they were in the war." Broadcast just before four more Canadian troops were killed in Afghanistan, his remarks triggered outrage from Ottawa. Gutfeld did eventually apologize for being "insensitive and stupid," but in the same breath he quipped that

Canada's army "could probably at least beat the Belgians." The same day, the Fox pre-produced show *How I Met Your Mother* featured Neil Patrick Harris asking Canada "Why do we let you be a country?"



HARTNELL/ODD

A bird's eye view of Afghanistan

At least one person may understand the sacrifice and progress Canadian troops are making in Afghanistan: Elina Goldberg, the first person to serve as an official spokesperson in Kandahar, notes that the mission, which has elicited 715 Canadian soldiers, is achieving real results, despite common misconceptions. Minister Stephen Harper said the war may not be winnable. "I don't think it's a lost cause," she said in her first interview since returning home in January. "We've always said that what needs to be done in Afghanistan is more than something just the military can deliver."

Not Good enough for the Juno Awards

Canada's version of the Grammys will roll through Vancouver

on March 29, but one local artist will be nowhere near the stage. Eurodance band Nuclear Justice's Good, a three-time Juno winner, says the awards show is pointless and shallow. "When it's actually a television broadcast that is vibrant and real, Canadian music, rather than what's doing well internationally and has been in our commercials and [radio commercial] 'flips,'" he said. Good's upcoming album, *Hummer*, will be available for download later this year.

Freed by kidnappers, nurse eases for Darfur

She was a nurse from Prince Edward Island who wanted to help alleviate suffering in Darfur. But when Liane Arber got caught by

working with the relief agency Médecins sans Frontières, she was kidnapped and held by gunmen for four days. "I definitely feared for my life," she recalled after being freed but welcomed. She won't say whether a ransom was paid, and despite the trauma, may yet return to Darfur. "My main concern now is just about my refugee colleagues. I know the people left in Darfur."

In other, much more pressing news...

There's a price to pay for being *Wanted*, especially when it comes to celebrity relationships. When Jennifer Aniston broke up with musician Jake Gyllenhaal, one of the alleged reasons was that the couple's songwriters spent all their time touring instead of recording her phone calls. "There he was, telling her he didn't have time for her," a friend told *Entertainment* magazine.



ASHTON KUTCHER AND DEMI MOORE

"and yet his page was filled with updates?" Moore while, Ashton Kutcher's Twitter feed included a nuptial photo of his wife, Demi Moore, bonding over tea before, along with the two men's go. "Don't tell me!" Moore then said in response that Kutcher was "such a sneak."

Sudoku for idiots

James F. Crook, an American mathematician, has devised a



LARRY J. ROBERTS

new algorithm capable of solving any Sudoku combination, no matter how difficult. Crook, a former Wheaton University computer science professor, is proud. No word yet on whether he's working on a self-solving crossword puzzle.

A new hionic woman

At a fashion show in Japan, designers unveiled a brand known as robot with a very un-human name: HRP 4C. Made of 30 square meters and covered in silver and black casing, the robot walked around, talked to the audience, and took a bow at the end of her performance. The high-tech man to man is more Robo-Cop than Yara Shai, but HRP is said to surprise and delight. Her face—captured by Japanese anime cartoons—can register some emotions like surprise and anger. She doesn't come cheaply. Developed at a cost of \$2 million, a solo-theme version sells for \$200,000.

Back on the throne
Story theories after the latest vote of the monarchy, the grandson of the late king was a choice of the crown in a national referendum. Elizabeth II chose 71 per cent of the vote in Italy's version of the referendum.

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Story theories after the latest vote of the monarchy, the grandson of the late king was a choice of the crown in a national referendum. Elizabeth II chose 71 per cent of the vote in Italy's version of the referendum.

So much for brotherly love

Canadian Dane Cook is running millions of dollars and his half brother, Darryl McCauley, is doing much and heavy changes. Cook hired McCauley in the early '90s to manage his personal company, Great Dane Entertainment, but ended up to an indictment. McCauley hired his brother's company to the benefit of his own bank account. In one suspicious transaction, the 45-year-old allegedly forged \$4.3 million cheque made out to himself. His monthly salary—\$282,000—wasn't cutting it.



DANIEL PRATY

Marriage is no joke

Daniel Letterman, the king of late-night TV, finally popped the question to his long-time girlfriend, Regina Lasko. A happy couple for 23 years—and the proud parents of a five-year-old son—the pair decided the time was right to exchange wedding vows. The venue? A Mexican courtyard. The *Last Show* host broke the news during a recent trip. "Regina and I began to talk in February of 1986, and I said, 'Well, things are going pretty good, let's just see what happens in about 10 years,'" he joked. "I sincerely felt that man who was married admired me. Like I was

the last of the real gunslingers, you know what I'm saying?"

Who said athletes aren't role models?

Two people who won't be following Letterman down the aisle anytime soon? Alex Rodriguez and Chris Rock. According to the New York tabloids, baseball's highest-paid player blew his money on more than just booze. He lived in two houses, too, and even got involved with a lawyer. The 36-year-old said he was more than just a player. He lived in two houses, too, and even got involved with a lawyer. The 36-year-old said he was more than just a player.



DANE COOK

Kristin Davis, the same high-profile model who famously helped secure a disgraced politician's re-election. She's the spokeswoman for the Toronto Raptors, had an equally tough week in court in court docket events of divorcing his girlfriend when the same woman's pregnant and refusing to give child support. The all-star denies the allegations, says he loves his daughter, and will "take care of responsibilities."



DANE COOK

Stand by your sex

Speaking of taking responsibility, *Sex and the City* producer Sarah Jessica Parker, the great mistress of Alberta newspapers, had her head open by a flying plane while covering a murder between the Ayra Gaud and sister-in-law. She was in the plane when it crashed. She was in the plane when it crashed. She was in the plane when it crashed.

engagements of Ottawa's mayor, Boris Tadić, is wanted in Paris for allegedly beating a newspaper in 1989 and killing four people. He is now working in Ottawa as a part-time lecturer at Carleton University while fighting extradition to France, and Tadić—despite denying his former common-law partner last year—is promising to make amends by his proposed bill conditions. Despite Tadić's unfaithful past, Tadić insists that his politics preclude the kind of violence he's accused of committing. "It's not out of love," he says of her promise to keep an eye on her estranged partner. "He's a nice man but I'm not in love with him. After some time love wears off."

The Pope, the press and prophetic

He made an impassioned and timely defense of democracy and good governance, but it's not what the world is going to remember about Pope Benedict XVI's first visit to Africa. In selected address in Angola, the 81-year-old said African they can transform the continent. "Freeing the people from the whip of greed, violence, disorder" by respecting economic and promoting values like human rights, freedom of the press and accountability. But the Pope's words were overshadowed by another controversial move: On the plane to Cameroon, the first leg of his trip, the Pope told reporters that condoms were not the answer to AIDS epidemic, adding that they only make things worse by encouraging promiscuity. The Vatican is complaining that Benedict's remarks are being unfairly and "selectively misquoted" around the world.

Piccard attack

Calgary Sun columnist Rick Bell, the great mistress of Alberta newspapers, had her head open by a flying plane while covering a murder between the Ayra Gaud and sister-in-law. She was in the plane when it crashed. She was in the plane when it crashed. She was in the plane when it crashed.



DANE COOK



ALEX RODRIGUEZ

day Bell is known affectionately as "The Digger."

Dying man confesses, forgets to die

After Juan Rivera suffered what he thought was a fatal stroke, the Oklahoma man decided he didn't want to perish with a guilty conscience. So he phoned the police and filed a report on the 1977 day of Tennessee resident Jimmy Carroll, an alien from suspected was finding around with his wife. Said the detective: "He wanted to discuss his soul because he thought he was going to the great beyond." But after spilling his guts in a deathbed confession, the 85-year-old didn't die. In fact, his condition mysteriously improved. Except for the minor charge he's now facing. ■

This is a new Frum, talking of health care, gay rights



ANDREW COYNE

Things have come a pretty pass at the Republican press when David Frum is the mousy moderate of the post-Frum's friend, but I think he would concede he has not earned out much of a reputation as an astute chronicler over the years. What's the best young writer who in the 1990s courted well-worn Republicans to "go back where they and the press," who'd taken gay marriage with one in the cover of *Saturday Night Magazine*?

Yet Frum is properly upset at the direction his party is going in, or rather not going, after the defeat of 2006 and 2008. More to the point, he has had the guts to take on a good section of the party, at considerable risk to his own prospects, not to say a few livelihoods. It isn't only David Lamberth, the talk radio king, with whom he has lately tangled (it's his former colleagues at the *National Review*, many of whom appear to delight in taking shots at him). And it's not merely strident bias, much of which seems to view him as a traitor and betrayer.

This is of course precisely Frum's point: The Republican party, and by extension the American conservative movement, has become an increasingly exclusive club, whose walls seem to be too bloodless a wall and whose circle of former members Lamberth is the embodiment of that spirit. In any, let's be blunt, divinely certain of its course and its destiny, of any devotion from its—this, as it were, when, Frum argues, the party is in dire need of a rethink of some of its more cherished nostrums.

As Frum has written, "the ideas and policies developed in the 1970s [and] to change and adapt to the very different world of the 21st century." In the 1970s, big government was the problem. But the consensus between big government and today's most pressing problems is no doctor as pressing." Con-

servatives, he argues, have got to come to terms with gay rights (it is an issue on which "he under no pretense has arrived at a new consensus"). They need to get across about the environment, to focus on fixing health care rather than cutting taxes, to propose some sort of alternative to Obamacare that does not amount to merely "holding the line."

It's a documentary, somewhat and perfectly consistent with the situation in Canada. Here, conservatives are in power, but admit, believing in nothing, rejecting principles in every turn. If Republicans were obvious, as Frum has it, to the importance of winning elections, Canada's Conservatives are winning them, for example, on more than the development.



There is an option in between the dogma of the GOP and cynicism of the Conservatives

option at both countries. Republicans, it is clear to say, have become unadaptable to one direction, insisting that both babies of the post-democratic market must always be kept alive. But our Conservatives have gone to the opposite extreme, not merely declining to take sides as a party on the issue, but floundering and indulging in random from the ground.

If cynicism holds a one option to be avoided, in other words, so is unprincipled opportunism. Each, moreover, is a kind of dogmatic financial program, no less than financial orthodoxy. As such, each is in the hands of concerning an ethics—on financial matters, in the case of Frum and his fellow GOP lawyer (David Brooks, New Gingrich, et al.) Nor is understanding, in the case of Frum, the case of Conservative party line.

Here, then, we are to meet between these two extremes—one devoted to principle, such as to just power beyond track, or more to compromise, such as to equity of power? All of it in the perspective, from practicing politicians at one end to academic theorists at the other (journalists are somewhere in between) are obliged to ask whether these questions with respect to whatever position we advance.

One, is it right? Is it possible we could be wrong? Or could policies that were once right need adjusting, in light of changing circumstances?

Two, is it relevant? It may be the right answer, but not to a question the public is asking. To be sure, leadership sometimes

crosses paths questions to the public that had not occurred to a unit now. But a party that does not address itself to the views on the public's mind will soon find no one to listen.

Three, is it principled? There are always lots of things that need doing. But there's only so much that can be done in one time, and the public's appetite for change is not infinite.

But if, as reflection, you have reason to think you're still right, can you see the public, within a matter of some urgency, then what is the excuse for inaction? Yes, cynicism

is an issue. But it is not the only issue. No, we are elected by capturing the middle ground. But that does not mean, as so many seem to assume, simply moving to the middle. The only successful political moves the middle to him.

There is a third alternative, in other words, between the dogmatism of the GOP and the cynicism of the Conservatives. It consists in political entrepreneurship: neither pandering to public opinion, nor spending it, but persuading the public to a point of view it did not previously hold. For politics is not, in the end, simply the art of the possible: it is the art of enlarging the possible. ■

ON THE WEB: For more on Andrew Coyne, visit his blog at www.andrewcoyne.com

Obama's torture problem is only just beginning



PAUL WELLS

Here is a problem. Late in 2006, a Guantánamo Bay detainee named Abu Zubaydah received the treatment he received in 2002 at the hands of his American captors.

"After the beating I was then placed in the metal box," he said. "The sound on my leg began to open and started to bleed. I don't know how long I remained in the metal box, I think I may have slept or maybe I didn't."

"A black cloth was then placed over my face and the interrogator used a metal water bottle to pour water on the cloth so that I could not breathe. After a few minutes the cloth was removed and the beat was repeated on an upright position. The pressure of the things on any sounds was very painful. I vomited."

Zubaydah is believed to be a senior associate of Osama bin Laden. He was described by his captors to representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross. In February 2007 the ICRC submitted to the U.S. government a report on the treatment of Zubaydah and 10 other high value detainees held in a network of "black sites" around the world. Some treatment a copy of that classification found it to a reporter named Mark Dunner. Dunner's 1,000-page report of the ICRC report, the first public description of its contents, is in the current issue of the *New York Review of Books*.

It's a problem because the ICRC concludes that the treatment the detainees suffered "constituted torture" and "constituted cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment."

Dunner adds: "Such withholding of identity from the body legally charged with overseeing compliance with the Geneva Convention... couldn't be more significant."

So all of this is a problem for many people, and even among them is Barack Obama. The new U.S. President has a lot on his plate. He has a banking system to fix and

war to win or wind down. He would like to be bipartisan. He does not like to confront Republicans if he can avoid it. Unless he is serious about all America would not turn. He ordered the prison in Guantánamo closed. He would like to leave this business of torture at that. He would rather not drag the responsible Bush administration officials, including perhaps his predecessor, to court. But the question may not be that simple.

That was the main conclusion I took from my telephone conversation with Mark Dunner the other day. His place in the *New York Review* is only one of several ways this story is developing, he said. The Senate intelligence committee has announced a "review of the CIA's detention and interrogation program."



It's a problem, too, for all of us, as we decide what to do with knowledge gained this way

For one. The judicial committee is calling for a "truth and reconciliation commission" of some sort. The American Civil Liberties Union has written to Attorney General Mark Holder demanding a special prosecutor to investigate torture under the Bush administration. Several people who have been detained, including Maher Arar, whose torture was recounted to Syria, have launched civil suits.

It's not clear how Obama can control all of that. I said in Dunner:

"We'll come to this in my mind," Dunner said, shouting, "He's only the President."

Dunner said Obama may yet decide "to consolidate some of these things into a broad, blue ribbon bipartisan commission, similar to the 9/11 commission." Not out of a spirit of weakness, but simply to try to get ahead of all these processes that are spreading along whether he wants them or not. "I think he's in a world of hurt when it comes to these issues. And they're going to have to confront them. They're taking a number of steps already, but they're at the beginning of trying to deal with these things."

This is a problem, too, for all of us, as we

try to decide what to do with the knowledge that a U.S. government torturer can do to origin some individuals at least for the prison in secret prisons around the world, and that a quality body investigating that treatment could call to court.

Never say the decisions made their treatment. They were kept carefully apart from one another, they could not have calculated, yet their accounts of their treatment match.

You can say they are bad men who had it all coming. But here's the thing about repeat only being a man, making his decision in his own voice, and leading him to believe he will draw his correct testimony cannot be said at trial. "One may doubt that any of the 14 'high value detainees' whose accounts are

given in this report will ever be tried and sentenced," Dunner writes.

You could say the abuse wrong information from these three lived lives. Clients to that effect are, say, the last, badly dispensed. In the meantime, remember all those false alarms in 2002 about attacks on banks and shipping malls and nuclear plants? Probably nearly as many as were bubbling to make their former torturers stop, kicking off court cases and going home.

The widespread abuse of prisoners delivers one certain result, however. Alberto Miano, a former U.S. Navy ground crew, told a Senate committee last year: "I have seen leaving U.S. Navy officers who maintain that the first and second identifiable causes of U.S. combat deaths in Iraq—as judged by their effectiveness in recruiting into the fight—were our combat—our, respectively, the symbols of U.S. Ghazal and Guantanamo." The same symbols have reached Afghanistan, where Canadians continue to fight and die. ■

ON THE WEB: For more on Paul Wells, visit his blog at www.paulwells.com/obamasobsessions



'There is too much "new" in society. There's TV, racy dances. I'm open enough but if I was in the modern world I'd be lost.'

MARTIN PATRIQUIN TALKS TO BR. GASTON DESCHAMPS ABOUT SILENCE, MODERN LIFE'S 'FOLLIES,' AND SEVEN DECADES INSIDE A MONASTERY

In February, Quebec's *Théâtre* monks left their monastery in Gîte, Que., just outside of Montreal, where they had lived alone for 127 years. Long associated with the Gîte choir they once produced, the order made the move to a comparatively smaller monastery about 120 km northwest of the city, largely because modern life, and its associated noise, had crept up on them. Gaston Deschamps, 86, joined the order in 1943, and has left the monastery a few times in his life, for medical treatment. The most recent move, he knows, will be his last.

Q Your headphones are to help you hear?
A. Yes. I'm sorry about the headphones. I'm as deaf as a jug.
Q Not to worry. Why did you become a monk?

A. My three older brothers were monks as well. I was left early by my calling, you might say. I was born when I first went to the monastery. I went all the way to be part of it, to the point of dressing like my brother and giving points to my mother head-on instead of the mother's skirt. They had to turn me away at the door. I had it in the blood.

Q How did your family feel about you just leaving your brothers?

A. My father felt very deeply about the monastery. We were a very religious family. I never knew my mother. She died in 1935 when I was three.

Q Do you have any family left?

A. Yes. My brother Lucifilio. He's 99 years old in August. He's not really with us any longer, though, because he got Alzheimer's.

Q How much do you keep up on what's going on in the world?

A. We vote, but I don't usually know who I'm voting for. I don't like politicians, because they always seem to be looking out for themselves. That's what they do. They do it to have a big salary. I'm not saying they're all the same, there have been some great ministers who were good, but there are others who are good at filling up their pockets.

Q And world events?

A. I'd say that I'm interested. Whenever there's something important going on we watch the news. We also have newspapers here. I think I've even had Macdonald.

Q You're as good company there. What do you know about Canada's Prime Minister?

A. I know his name, but not much else. I'm Canadian, but I'm not his confessor.

Q What event has most affected you recently?

A. It was terrible. I didn't read it in the paper, but my superior spoke to us about it. The child who was murdered by his father [Elisabeth Finkel, who was confined for psychiatric care after killing her son, Paul, in 1992].

A. It was terrible. I didn't read it in the paper, but my superior spoke to us about it. The child who was murdered by his father [Elisabeth Finkel, who was confined for psychiatric care after killing her son, Paul, in 1992].

There's too concerned about what is happening now than what is going to happen later. They don't realize that one day everybody dies and everybody goes to the other side, and that you have to prepare.

Q Has the world always been a bad place? Is it worse now than before?

A. I find it worse now. Look at Israel and the Palestinians. It doesn't make any sense. It's always kind of wasting a little piece of land from the other person. They can't stay peaceful with one another, and people get killed for stupid, inconsequential things.

Q You and your fellow brethren left Gîte because the modern world was interfering on you.

A. Yes. It was the noise. The airplanes were the worst. I'm human like everyone else, and I like some airplanes in the sky, even though I've never been in one, so I don't know what it's like at all. Airplanes and trucks, motor cycles and women and their little children. I mean, there's talk about all, but we lost our peace. There was no silence. We didn't even have airplanes coming over. It allows us to live what we need.

Q What do you think about the modern world?

A. There are too many new things. For a long time we didn't know anything about television or radio. It's not that we hear or listen to it. To be honest, a lot of it doesn't interest me.

Q You were born in Montreal in 1922. What do you remember of the city?

A. All I can say when I was born was still a child, barely 19 years old. I was already involved with the Church, singing at the Notre-Dame cathedral. I lived at 1419 Jeanne Mance, near Prince Arthur. It was quite quiet then. The city was kind of peaceful, to be honest. There were the days before Major Jean Drapeau, who I thought was an honest man. He often came to the monastery of Gîte. Since I joined the order I've only been in Montreal to go to the hospital. When I first came to the monastery, I stayed 15 years before our leaving for the first time.

Q What were the early days in the monastery like?

A. When I got to the monastery it was very quiet because there were 275 brothers, and now we are 26. I took care of the cows and worked in the laundry room for 12 years. The laundry room wasn't a big job, but I had been because I was young. I even made my own soap from the cows we killed. I was in the boiler room for 37 years. I would let people to close down the boiler room before we came here. The boiler room was huge to me. I loved it, but the Monks made me deaf.

Q Tell me about your daily routine.

A. We start at about 3:45 a.m. We have what is called the night vigil, about 45 minutes. After breakfast, we have lauds, the morning prayer. Then we sit and read, mostly spiritual books. Then we have mass at 8:15 in the morning, and then we go to our rooms again to pray. At 12:15 we have our lunch prayer. After lunch we have individual prayer, and then we work. We are fairly strict here. We aren't allowed to eat meat during the week, though we are allowed to have meat on Saturdays and on feast days.

An evening prayer at 6:30. At 7:30 we have another short prayer. I usually go to sleep at nine o'clock. It's winter now, so we wear when I came to the monastery our robes were all in Latin. Now they are in French, and I love you think the more that you say. It's beautiful. Apart from our prayer we are free to decide ourselves to whatever we want. I'm reading about St. Thomas Aquinas, he died at 24 of tuberculosis and gave his life to God. He suffered for the poor people. It's quite beautiful. It's what we do here.

Q It's really about repetition, isn't it? Why is it so important to you?

A. Our routine here keeps us close to God.

Q Silence is also quite important. Why is that?

A. Spend a week here and you'll see. We have no noise where you can say No. We have no radio, no television, you'll see how it will change you. It's in silence where you find the solution.

Q We know that fewer people go to church now, that fewer people are closer to God.

A. Yes, it's very, very sad.

Q Why do you think people have lost faith?

A. There are too many modernities, too much "new" in society. There's TV, there's racy dances. I'm open enough, but if I was in the modern world I'd be lost. The way young girls carry themselves, the way young men carry their hair like the Mohawk Indians. I wouldn't be comfortable speaking with them, I don't think.

Q What about rap about money that we go to church for?

A. We're not that into it. We've used to have 12 and a half. We've returned God from every aspect of life. When you have faith in God, you have faith in life. We have people who call here to tell us that they want to come in and see. These are people who don't want to sleep with them. We've become too preoccupied with what is on the outside. I can't say it any other way. You have to live in the world. It's good for the spirit. I'll give you an example. I had a man from the city who came here for a week because he was stressed beyond belief. He worked for Montreal's transit authority. He said that after the first day here he was comfortable with all the silence, but by the end of the week he didn't want to leave. Being there opens you up. It's good for the spirit.

Q At one point there were nearly 200 monks living in the monastery. How many are left?

A. We had about 200 monks when I came here. We had about 200 monks when I came here. We had about 200 monks when I came here.

Q I know [the PM's] name, but not much else. I'm Canadian, but I'm not his confessor.

Q What do people want for the next few weeks?

A. I wish people would pay less attention to life's follies.

Q Speaking of which, there's a financial crisis in the world today.

A. Yeah, I heard about it. I don't really follow it, though. Money doesn't matter to me. I used to fix watches and clocks for people, and charge a certain amount. But what are I supposed to do with money?

Q So the economic crisis doesn't affect you?

A. Nope. I don't understand the idea of it. In English, we call it greed.

A. That's just it. The person who makes money always wants to make more.

Q How can we overcome what you want in life?



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PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/GETTY IMAGES
FULL PAGE PHOTOS: HARPER playing down the fact he is in part a response to Ignatieff, who's under fire for bringing in leading foreign leaders

MAN OF THE WORLD

Harper's best incentive to tour the globe? The friendly foreign press.

BY JOHN DECEASE — Remember last fall's vision of Stephen Harper in campaign mode, his preferred setting was the backdrop of an average-looking family? When it comes to talking policy, he was all about cutting the tie on class, or giving parents a tax break for their kids' music lessons. But that down-home guy hasn't been seen lately. In his place, a remodel, internationally oriented Prime Minister has been repeatedly sighted. His favoured backdrop is the CNN set of Barack Obama's G8, captured viewing, not for mere Canadians, but for foreign agents buffed everywhere. His policy preoccupations tend toward international financial regulation and the future of NATO.

Harper's image makeover may be as much a matter of necessity as choice. Last year's financial meltdown, and the global recession it sparked, laid out a stark picture of the political game. Suddenly, his play-by-play—easy-to-grasp cutouts, always in eye to suburban family concerns—looked mostly irrelevant. So when

President Barack Obama came calling in February, Harper was eager to reposition himself. Showing the world his side with the politician who personifies a new sort of globalism, he also thanked his own. Soon he was in New York City, before Obama's current questions and projecting a broader world view through the *Wall Street Journal*.

And that was just a warm-up for this spring's season of high-stakes diplomacy. The action began in London on April 2, with a casual gathering of the G8, the club of nations that's supposed to be steering the economic crisis. Then it's off to a two-day NATO summit, to be held jointly in Strasbourg, France, and across the border in the German city of Baden-Baden and Köln. Later in April comes the Summit of the Americas, in Trinidad and Tobago. Beyond all the conferences, watch for Harper to sidestory into international media to assert his relevance. "It's about directly engaging political leaders and policy-makers," said a senior government official.

It's also, of course, about finding ways to present Harper as a big-league man, at a time when his Conservative party is in trouble in the polls and facing, in Michael

Ignatieff, a Liberal rival who's eager to reposition himself in comfortably as the international leaders' circuit. There's no doubt Harper often faces better with foreign journalists than with the Ottawa media. The *Wall Street Journal* headlined its opening piece on him: "A spectacle ally in the war on credit, but calling him 'individual' when he was creditless, but crediting him with 'skillfully sidestepping' questions when he was evasive. Zoltan introduced Harper to CNN's audience by announcing that Canada hasn't had to bail out either, asking, "What are they doing that we're not?" The message: this guy's here to teach us something.

Harper's homegrown critics are far less deferential. To them, his international sojourn is still defined by his relationship from 2006 through 2008 with George W. Bush. Harper agreed himself closely with the previous U.S. president, and with former Australian prime minister John Howard, forming a sort of Anglophone conservative club. Their rhetoric drew stark distinctions between friends of democracy and enemies, rather than friends of broader coalitions. "What's going on now here?" says Jeremy Kuzman, a former top

diplomat who was Canada's ambassador to the European Union when he retired in 2007, "he's got to stop being a black and white, declarative, rhetorical observer of international affairs, and actually get involved in the creation of affairs."

Kuzman doesn't have anything to fear, however, that persuader has Harper means it when he takes a multilateralist line now. "To the *Wall Street Journal*, for instance, Harper defended Colombian President Álvaro Uribe—who was widely seen as Bush's closest South American ally—by contrasting his government with an "increasing number of real serious enemies and opponents" in the region. Kuzman called that evasive, an apparent reference to Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, "bizarre," and a potential insult to moderately left-leaning South American governments.

There's no doubt Harper's often fragile way of talking about international relations tends to grate on the ears of career diplomats. In fact, one of the presidents of the strategy to most himself as a world player is that his Tories have not shown the foreign service much love. Canadian embassies, high commissions, and other missions abroad, are stuck to their funding cut to \$179 million next year, from \$666 million when the Conservatives first won power in 2006.

David Emerson, who served in Harper's foreign office before quitting politics last year, is among those calling for him to "expand and renew" the Foreign Affairs Department. But he says the Conservative party's base tends to harbour deep-seated suspicions about the foreign service. "It's weighed up in a negative way," Emerson told Maclean's, "that the diplomatic corps are a camp and wine crowd who aren't getting much done on the ground in Canada. It's wrong."

Harper's advisers aren't apologetic for squeezing the foreign service. "The amount of money you spend on bureaucracy is not what determines your international relevancy," said an official in the Prime Minister's Office. The PMO clearly sees Harper well positioned to make an impact, and even Canada's newly acquired reputation as a nation of sensible financial regulation as giving him credibility at the G8. At NATO, Canadian boots on the ground, and deals in a corner, lend weight to his voice on military and security questions. Neither endorsement on the skills of traditional diplomacy.

Leading out on the last pack, though, will not be a challenge. Obama is bound to play a starring role in London. The host, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, has asked his political director to display "a mastery of economic life, based on his long experience as long-term shareholder of the company. To lead a host of world-media attention, Harper



U.S. MEDIA CALLED HIM SKILFUL, REFRESHING. THE OTTAWA PRESS MOB? NOT SO MUCH.



HE HAS a way of getting on the ears of diplomats, with Gordon Brown, above, at the UN

will need to further leverage his now former boast that Canada hasn't had to bail out its banks, unlike the U.S. and Britain. John Kirton, a University of Toronto political science professor and expert on current politics, says Harper really is an advance man, by finding ground between the U.S. segment for more stimulus spending and the European focus on tighter financial regulation. Flattery isn't another post-getting those users of words' heads—much. He indeed emerged as an accepted priority heading into the London lecture, naming "Flattery's message, it's fair to say, did serve as a pull of conversation," Kirton said.

That sum of subtle influences on the course of choice might interest academics, but is unlikely to be reported as it. In short, training into a clear benefit to the polls. In fact, it's not as obvious as it has been. Harper's first big international foray as Prime Minister, a week-long Latin American trip in the summer of 2007, seemed to go well, but his approval rating slipped soon after. Flattery's exhaustively covered Obama visit to Ottawa, and Harper's apparently successful Medvetan just the following week, appeared to give him only a brief, modest payoff in English Canada, which wasn't enough to offset a serious decline in Quebec.

Pollster Nik Nason, president of Nason Research, says foreign trips tend to "incrementally add to the image of a sitting prime minister, assuming there are no major gaffes." But Nason says no evidence even as upturn on the world stage recently means party support numbers. Indeed, as Harper enjoyed a spate of successful international attention, his Conservatives only managed to trend up by 35 per cent on a March Nason poll, barely changed from 36 per cent in February, while Liberal support rose to 36 per cent, from 33 per cent in February. It's possible, though, that without the favorable attention, and the Obama glow, Harper's Tories might have been dragged down further by all the troubling economic news.

Not all foreign policy, though, is aimed at those daunting economic problems. At the NATO summit, Harper will have to try to emphasize Canada's ongoing work in Afghanistan, rather than the upcoming shift to 30 Canadian military missions. At the April 17-19 American summit in Trinidad and Tobago, Harper will have to somehow show that the world's still alive in his early push to emphasize the western hemisphere. Andrew Cooper, associate director of the University of Waterloo's Centre for International Governance Innovation, says he has a hunch there'll be little emphasis on the flow as Prime Minister, or even the Canadian government's permanent office to engage on a wide range of issues. "A global-minimalist foreign policy can be effective," Cooper says. "But you're probably not going to play out some of the different ones, you're going to be able to close a few."

Of those two innovative paths, sticking to a few priorities that can be managed closely by the Prime Minister's Office sounds more like Harper's way of working. The foreign service, after all, keeps heading. Harper's own office looks like it will be about a political adviser to make himself at home on the world stage, not a government agency to build on Canada's capacity to make a difference in international affairs. ■

HELPING FRIENDS IN NEED

Suddenly, Ottawa seems eager to restart an old battle

BY JONATHAN CATHOUBE AND PHILIPPE

ORDER • It's a rather intricate puzzle, but, best construction work yet: the Canadian Museum of Human Rights in Winnipeg is scheduled to begin April 1. There won't be a lot of familiar off-the-ground construction ceremony was held last year before Christmas. Harving Munroe James made the trek to the Innisfree site in December 1992, the first time since Sir David Prime Minister Stephen Harper's inauguration in 1993. The project, which is a tribute to the late Lady Agaper, had made the nation's national dream to become a reality. The 150-million project will be the "crown jewel" of the legacy of the founder of Canadian Global Communications, James, who died April 1, 1992. Agaper, a daughter, proudly looked on. In creating the first national museum outside of Ottawa, the Conservative government has pledged \$100 million toward construction costs, and a disbursement of \$10 million to the Agaper family in perpetuity. But when it comes to building the Agaper family's vision of a museum, it's the Agaper family's vision of a museum, it's the Agaper family's vision of a museum, it's the Agaper family's vision of a museum.

As Comcast, owner of 31 daily net papers and two Canadian afternoon newspapers with bankruptcy, approaching yet another round of bond deadline with its creditors on April 3, Thomson is sending a lifeline. Last week Moore confirmed that the Harper government is looking at lowering broadcast regulations and changing tax rules to help pay the company, and other struggling private broadcasters, a one shot. And while the other nine major net groups would that no specific promises have been made, it's clear what the networks have on their wish list: a reversal of CRTC policy that would see cable and satellite providers pay their "carriage fee" for the basic TV channels they now pay for as free. That arrangement would cut the broadcast sector an estimated \$1,900 million a year, perhaps enough to stave off inevitable layoffs.

Cannizzaro blanches at the idea of calling it a bailout, but the company welcomes any

gations that the Times are now ready to listen to a complaint they've been making for more than three decades. "It's a sign that the government is heeding the growing chorus of voices—consumer groups, organized labor, the opposition, special interest groups—who are all saying that the way consumer dollars are collected for viewing cable are not being adequately and fairly sent around to everybody," says John Douglas, Carrow's vice president public affairs.

Consensus among CTV and Quebec members of the French TV network has long been that after the CRTC in treaty their common national channels move into specialty networks that receive a share of cable and satellite subscribers' receipts but do not provide live Show Communications, and Rogers, which owns MuchMusic, are vehemently opposed to the idea, claiming they will be forced to pass on the costs to customers, inflating bills by as much as \$10 a month, and threatening their own customers to quit. "If I had imposed on us, I'd go to run the cable industry as well," says Paul Reid, vice chairman of Rogers Communications. "We're to do it as a market in a basic cable bill we feel very well. We'll have a massive reduction of our customer and we'll have to subsidize the whole business."

As recent as last fall, the CRTIC rejected demands for such aid, saying the network failed to prove they really needed the higher subsidies that as the global economic slide down their state its toll on advertising, broadcast stations are finding that Ottawa is a lot more receptive to buying—rather than crying—poor.

In a February speech, CRTIC chairman Ronald von Kroschinsky suggested Canada's broadcast media was "broken." Douglas points out: "And anything that would be contemplated by the federal government, it's amazing, would be in recognition that the state of the industry is what we said it was two years ago."

BROADCASTERS FIND OTTAWA MORE RECEPTIVE TO THEIR BEING—RATHER THAN CRYING—POOR

Since the fall, Caterpillar has laid off several hundred workers across its tracks, looking for cutbacks and non-hour newsrooms, and put an eye on the Internet channels on the block, suggesting it might simply walk away from them unless a buyer can be found. And the company's not alone. Late last year, CTV took a \$4.7 billion write-down on the value of its

LOCAL MEDIA CLOSURES THREATEN THE TORIES' FAVOURITE STRATEGY FOR COMMUNICATIONS

The auditors gave notice of interest in buying private broadcasters—at a time when the Tories are resolutely refusing to do the publicly owned CBC, which faces its own \$40-million advertising shortfall—has piqued the interest of the opposition. The House of Commons standing committee on Canadian heritage is launching hearings into the television industry's economic crisis, with special attention to the two that bind. "We want to make sure that James Moore isn't making a whole heap deal with a bunch of lobbyists who are

CANWESIT'S Licensed Agent making the transition from Liberal to Conservative

led to the CRTC, in February as part of its renewed push for carriage fees, the company wrote that the "very success of conventional television in English Canada is now being threatened." It, too, has made deep cuts to local programming, led off handbills, and announced plans to walk away from three underperformance stations. "Right now, the

cost of the new 30,000-seat facility is the University of Minnesota. And David Asper, Cawston's executive vice-president, will take control of the new state-owned franchise.

The "broadcaster" licenses are set for renewal this spring, and the CRTC reporting carriage fees to cable operators at the behest of the industry. Financial woes, the commission has just indicated its willingness to overlook content and local programming requirements. And although the CRTC isn't altogether opposed to fee for carriage, it continues to be lukewarm on the idea. In his March speech to the Canadian Film and Television Production Association, von Ploosman said conventional broadcasters have so far failed to explain to cable companies "how the second half of the collection of the

country's A.T. "It's even if the private network gets their will, it's not clear it will be enough to save Canwest. It would be much better for the publishers to merge—and perhaps too late for a company struggling with close to \$1 billion in debt and heavy creditors."

Then there is the whole notion of protection. The country's largest media union, the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, is also expected to be wary of building out the company and the weight of its "bad business decisions." After all, other sectors of the media—radio, newspapers, magazines—also are struggling in the current economic climate. And if the government isn't in saving Canwest, a protective local programming, copyright and other restrictions is a curious way to go about what they accept. "Local programming is not the answer," says Peter Macleod, a former Canwest executive who says the move is made in his view.

Others are quick to point out that it's just shrinking resources that drive pay for losers in the hole. In 2008, the private equity record-setting \$775 million on the rights to U.S. programming, part of a \$1.5-billion deal, has seen such cash bailouts seven to ten times a year. "It's just their ownership channels that are hurting," says Roger P. LaPorte, a former executive at Viacom. "I'm not saying that specialty services and other parts of the industry weren't profitable. They're just using the economy as an excuse to do what they've wanted to do for a long time."

And as experienced south of the border as proving, public relations of private corporations are not always an easy sell. Perhaps that's why viewers of Global television have recently been treated to ads, under the Crest banner, that talk up the strength and importance of Canada's auto industry. Their companies, dealerships and workers need our help, say the spots. A public service with a not-so-hidden message. **M**

SHARING ALBERTA'S PAIN

Why its economic woes will be felt across the country

BY NICHOLAS KOHLER • Nick Cook, an oilfield farm boy from B.C. with two Rebo glom good looks, was just out of high school when he arrived in the energy hub of Nisku, Alta., two years ago looking for work. Within days he'd scored a job as a leechman, the lowest rung on the drill rig ladder. "I did my dropouts and they said, 'Okay, you're ready to work,'" Cook says. "Yeah, I'm ready." They said, "Okay, drive out now, you're already late." He was soon earning \$11 an hour sleeping out all the ground. So eager was Alberta's overhyped oil patch for even inexperienced labor that his wages were bumped to \$25 an hour. It was brutal work—he put in his share of six-week stints—but back to camp two gourmet meals awaited, a "cassero" to clean up, a fridge full of pop, juice and ice cream, and all the satellite TV he could watch. "I would say we lived pretty good," he says.

New Cook is chafed working at his father's home in Salmon Arm, B.C. He has not worked since September and has no prospects. He owns \$6,000 on his credit card and can no longer afford the minimum payments. "I'm just working hard," says Cook, now 31. "You feel like a real man. It sounds stupid to say but you're making decent money. You're really working."

Thanks to recession and collapsed oil commodity prices, there are few Nick Cooks working the patch today. Oil trades at \$36.50 a barrel, after peaking at \$100 in July 2008. Nisku, once the real backbone of Alberta's conventional energy sector—accounting for almost three-quarters of its conventional oil, activity and royalties—has lost 49 per cent of its jobs, the 11,600 to 70,000 over the same period. Red Deer is a traffic snarl of parked drilling rigs. Thousands of Calgary engineers, once recruited from around the world, are abruptly out of work and flocking to get home by means of the likes of South America. Calgaryites, a business magazine whose annual "Top 50 under 40" once profiled young phenoms and delisted the city's sometimes brash and often bitter elite, just closed. "A huge swath of the workforce right now has only seen one side of a cycle—they don't know what it's like," says Blogger Society,



DALE AYON (right) made \$16,000 a month working the oil fields; now he's collecting EI.

president of the Paralel Services Association of Canada. This is what it's like. Next month, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty will drop an Alberta budget that posts a deficit for the first time in 10 years—a \$1-billion—largely due to the sinking Heritage Fund, many-day savings account. The Alberta Tories are otherwise boasting the province's Ralph Klein-era profits. Last week they cut a gas rebate providing Albertans with a winter heating subsidy. Klein's before that they unveiled the "Alberta Ad-venture" slogan, adopted by Klein to advertise the province's low taxes and lack of debt.

None of that new for Alberta. In the early 1980s, inflation, low oil and gas prices and the National Energy Program conspired to defuse good times. A second hit to oil and gas prices in 1985 prolonged the malaise into the 1990s. (The more sedate mining oil patches have taken to upgrading that old bumper sticker: "Mine Oil, let there be another oil boom. I promise not to piss in all your new cars"—adding, cynics like, "Okay, God, this time I'm serious.") Others favor Betty Spence above the big line.

"Oooh, I did it again!"

But this time the consequences of Alberta's slump won't be limited to the West. Canada's was a good deal of its prosperity over the past decade to Alberta's energy boom, from hefty federal surpluses to soaring stocks to the surge in the dollar. But if Alberta also shared its wealth, the rest of Canada will now partake in its hurt. A massive dumping of trade-ins—seasoned veterans as well as young grads like Cook—flooded from Alberta into the rest of Canada's most dependent regions. So abrupt is the migration that in Newfoundland, to name one destination, Premier Danny Williams has set aside 10,000 options in stimulus, aimed at just putting that province's prodigal sons to work.

The trouble will ripple out also in the form of diminished tax dollars for Ottawa. Indeed, since commodity prices began sinking in the last 1990s, Alberta's have shouldered an enormous share of the national burden, says University of Calgary economist Robert Mansell, not merely through the federal equalization system but



THE AMOULBERTA GIVES THE REST OF CANADA WHAT SOON FALL BY 25 PER CENT

via the employment insurance program and the Canada Pension Plan. Now Mansell estimates that between 2001 and 2004, Albertans sent the federal average net fiscal contribution of \$1,500 per capita in 2004 dollars, compared to \$1,370 from Ontario taxpayers and \$1,160 from British Columbians. In the last four years, those contributions grew to an average of about \$4,000 per capita per year, he says. "The average Alberta family of four has been making a net fiscal contribution to the federal government of about \$16,000 per year."

A hefty but few waning days of cash-strapped thing we're in trouble. According to Mansell's calculations, the average Albertan's contribution was a whopping \$17,719 in 1991, the year after the introduction of the NER, which was designed to send a greater share of Alberta's energy wealth to the rest of Canada. The next year, oil prices crashed and that contribution shrank to \$5,955 (again in 2004 dollars). Then, after the 1996 Mulroney election, the NER was scrapped. Albertans' average net fiscal contribution fell to just \$480 per capita. Still, that remained an unusual high relative to other provinces in the late 1980s and early 1990s, then it soared again when commodity prices boomed in the 1990s. Over the years—and

to particular effect during the era of official budget surpluses—Mansell says Albertans contributed a per capita average of \$1,450 per year, over three times the \$750 Ontario taxpayers in some Ottawa.

Now Albertans may find relief in events similar to those of 25 years ago. "It certainly

be more in the range of \$1,000 per person per year," he says—about 25 per cent less. The impact of low commodity prices will also resound beyond Alberta in the form of lost jobs, particularly in the already damaged manufacturing sector, due to declining demand in the oil sands. Those two years were meant to be a high point in oil sands development, with 240 billion worth of projects under way. Now the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers projects just \$11 billion in spending in the next two years. That loss of capital investment will hurt beyond Alberta's borders. Three years ago, the Canadian Energy Research Institute predicted oil sands developments would create five times as many jobs outside the oil and gas sector as within it, and that as much as 15 per cent of their overall employment impact would take place in Quebec.

So far, in Alberta, the employment slough has been relatively slow in coming. That is to a backlog of oil sands construction projects set for next year. "People think this was an energy boom," says Alberta Federation of Labour president Gil McGowan. "I can't emphasize enough how construction has been the engine of the Alberta economy." That engine is now sputtering to a halt.

"People are still buying cars," says Neil Shelly, executive director of Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association. "What we're skipping here is the second to third quarter of this year. This building is going to start getting chewed up. As projects are completed—where are the people going to find work?"

By February, when it lost 24,000 jobs, Alberta's unemployment rate had already climbed a whole percentage point, hitting 14.4 per cent, to beat as it's been in six years and worse than Saskatchewan or Manitoba. Numbers released this week showed Alberta leading the country in net employment benefits: 135,000 in January, a drop from 150,000 in December. "We're facing not a benign slowdown, but a real crisis," says McGowan, who predicts that in the absence of major oil sands development in the next two years, Alberta's construction boomlet faces could drop by 50,000 workers. "That's not even factoring in the loss of thousands of jobs in the upstart industry," he says.

Although Mansell hasn't crunched the numbers for how the contributions of Albertans may decline as, say, US\$60- or US\$80-a barrel oil, "and certainly remember those policy where costs are much higher than they were in 2005, I suspect the net balance would



YOU SHOULDNT CARE ABOUT THE BEAR IN THE AIR—Bears being useful for domestic purposes, if there are any, it can rarely be of help for environmentalists. The only bears which directly matter today are those responsible for the slump in stock markets, whether it's London, New York, Toronto or wherever. —Gentry Trowlow, head of the political section of the British Embassy in Ottawa, discussing Stephen Harper's "incoherent, increasingly aggressive" military fight in the Canadian Arctic.

THE RISE OF 'ALQAEDA'

FRONT-LINE REPORT: In Pakistan's Swat valley, the Taliban hold sway. But engaging 'moderates' may only embolden jihadists. BY ADNAN R. KHAN

He's not your typical looking militant, nothing like the tall, bearded Osama bin Laden or the choleric Ayman al-Zawahiri. He says nothing to a visiting reporter about decapitating the evil West or running vengeance down on the infidel's. Sidi-Muhammed, by most measures, is what any Canadian might affectionately call grandpa—in the right setting. But here in Mlogora, the main city of Pakistan's Swat valley, 110 km north-west of the capital Islamabad, the monster doesn't quiet lie. Given the fact that he is surrounded by black-turbaned militants, the soft-spoken octogenarian exudes a different kind of respect than the reverence only bestowed on others, a respect based on fear.

In Swat, a mountainous former tribal area ravaged by nearly two years of conflict and now overrun by Taliban militants, Muhammad seems an unlikely peace-broker. The head of Pakistan's most feared militant outfit, the Taliban's Mitteri Shariat Mahan mad (TSM), and a one-time jihad who now claims to have renounced violence, Muhammad is positioning himself to be the new face of the Pakistani Taliban. This is the man whom Pakistani government officials view as a member of the "moderate" Taliban, a man dedicated not to global jihad but to Islam and Pakistanis' wishes, who can, perhaps bring calm to paradise. Indeed, a job is dead, broadcast by him, between the pro-U.S. government in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Taliban militants, has brought some reprieve to Swat.

But that agreement, and others like it with militants in parts of Pakistan's governed tribal areas, has not won international consideration that Pakistan is not committed to the fight against extremists. They have also raised

new concerns that the authorities, by signing such peace deals, have left the extremists free to impose their harsh rule over the region, and pursue with impunity their war against the NATO-led coalition in Afghanistan.

It is also unclear how much this fragile peace can be by itself. After nearly two years of violence, the picturesque valley has been reduced to a narrow shadow of its former self. Officials estimate it would take seven years in the range of US\$500 million, a princely fortune in Pakistan terms, to rebuild what was once a thriving tourist haven—assuming tourists would want to visit an area where militants espousing a harsh vision of Islam hold sway. Hotels with names like Rose Palace, White Palace and Paradise City sit empty on the green slopes of snow-peaked mountains, while in the remote villages where tribal feud runs deep an impoverished existence, the Taliban is celebrating a victory.

Seated on the floor in a tiny, windowless room wedged into a back corner of his compound in Mlogora, a small, portly bearded man around 40 years old, the 40-year-old Sidi-Muhammed chooses his words carefully when talking about the deal he's just together. It's not for him to give peace interviews, especially these days, with his hands shaking and the situation in Swat on a knife's edge. "Since I was freed from jail, I have worked hard to end the violence here," he says, referring to the six years he spent behind bars, starting in 2002, after returning from a failed jihad in support of the Afghan Taliban after the U.S. led invasion of late 2001. "But with God's help, I have succeeded."

That may be oversteering the case slightly. Though Pakistan authorities have capitulated to Taliban demands to impose sharia in Swat—the main feature of the deal—the

deal may be against the agreement sticking if there is any indication of similar agreements with Taliban in May 2007 and May 2008 crumbled before they were even completed. The more so, though, with Muhammad's acting as intermediary, some progress has been made. All-out war between the Pakistani military and the militants has been replaced with a tense peace, and sharia courts have started opening, although Taliban rule has complicated how slowly they are being established, and has threatened to pull the plug on the agreement if the process is not speeded up.

Meanwhile, there have been reports that the Taliban have already begun cementing their harsh control over the region—only undermining the concerns about Pakistan's authorities having sanctioned a safe haven



THE LAWLESS FRONTIER: Pakistani Taliban standing guard of a place where kidnapped security personnel are being held

for extremists. Add to that recent atrocities, like last Sept. when a suicide truck bombing of the Marriot Hotel in Islamabad, and gunmen brutally attacking it in London and other cities in the relatively peaceful city of Lahore, and the question arises: are militants in the process of winning over large areas of Pakistan? Certainly the situation of Pakistan's all-powerful military has been decimated from the fight against militancy, in the face of supposed treaties with India after Pakistan's continued tensions with India. Moreover, last November, Meersville, word that Pakistan's notorious Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, which in the past helped foster the Taliban and other extremists, is unwilling to support militants in the hope of securing influence through them in

Afghanistan, only adds another ominous dimension to this story. And even more dangerously for Pakistan, the agreements with extremists have come at a great cost: authority in the country is being severely undermined by government crisis—one that has, in itself, bolstered the militants' antipathy toward secular authority.

That political instability has its roots in the ongoing power struggle between the opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), headed by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), under Pakistan's current president, Asif Ali Zardari, the husband of assassinated former PPP leader Benazir Bhutto. The face for this corrective crisis was in on Feb. 25, when the strong edges of Pakistan's Supreme

Court upheld a lower court ruling barring Sharif and his brother, Shabaz, from holding any political office.

The decision instantly disqualified Sharif from his post as chief minister of the Punjab, Pakistan's richest and most populous province, one dominated by the PML-N. Hosen after that ruling, Zardari imposed a colonial-era rule allowing him to appoint the governor—in this case a PPP ally—to run the province. But those Supreme Court justices, all appointed by Pakistan's previous leader, former Musharraf, after he declared emergency rule in November 2007 and sacked most of the existing constitutional judiciary, are seen as legitimizing by the opposition. That, and Zardari's maneuvering, sent the Sharif's supporters to the streets in a wave of



Every
Day



It's better
to have a body
in shape than
to obsess
about the shape
of your body.

Eat well, include milk products, be active
whenever you can, and be yourself.

That's the best way to attain and maintain your healthy weight—

a healthy weight where you feel healthiest and happiest,

inside and out. Get more helpful tips for women, by women, at

yourhealthyweight.ca



The photo above is only for information
and is not a recommendation.

Awakening—awakening is some measure of peace there. (It is no accident that Gen. David Petraeus, the architect of the U.S. successful counter-insurgency strategy in Iraq, is now

THE TALIBAN ARE ENTWINED WITH GLOBAL JIHADISM

The likelihood of this happening is very real, given that the Taliban are still being supported by powerful elements in Pakistan's military establishment. According to local ISI sources in Swat, who spoke to *Al-Monitor* on condition of anonymity, the deal with the TNSM as well as the agreement in other parts of Pakistan's tribal belt are part of a larger ISI plan to re-establish its influence.



RAUSTANI TROOPS patrolling in Swat, an opportunity to join the political process.

in Afghanistan. Since the fall of the Taliban regime there, the ISI has been looking for a new ally that would counter rising Indian influence with the Karzai government in

Hard at work deciphering the Afghan puzzle is II and when those elements enter the Afghan political arena, Pakistan wants to be sure it will have some leverage with them.

It's an old and risky game, considering the current Taliban of Quedus arzus. And what's most interesting about the Secor deal is not what it promises for the east but what it omits: it does not require the TNSM to halt its support for Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. Indeed, what it does do is free up its over-

The common belief in Pakistani military circles, as many Western diplomats have also come to believe, is that the Taliban will eventually have to play a role in the future of Afghan politics. The situation would be much the same as in Iraq, where the former Iraqi party has been brought back into the political fold, albeit under a different name, the *Awl*



**THE
ISSUE
IN...**

years, now frustrated and experienced after two years of leading the Palestinian military, to carry the war across the border. Significantly, an agreement between opposing Taliban factions in the North and South Westerns tribal areas suggests that the strategic shift is now joined to the Swedish demands. The rapprochement between Abdullahi Mullahad, a Pakistani Taliban warlord and target of recent US drone strikes, and his rivals, Manaf Nur and Haidar Gul Bahar (both of whom had signed peace deals with the Pakistan government), points to a larger Taliban objective. Indeed, a recent announcement from Afghan Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid (once seeking the Pakistani Taliban to stop fighting Pakistan and instead focus on attacking the Afghans) adds some credence to the speculation that the Taliban, with the aid of the ISI, is preparing for a major showdown and coalition troops.

In Swat, the TNSM militants will not be drawn into admitting that they will join the fight in Afghanistan. They do, however, voice their support for the Afghan jihad. "Our brothers there are suffering like us," Malahori said, adding ominously that the Afghan war is a *valid jihad*, which would imply that any of his fellow citizens who are considered by Islamic law to go there and fight by remaining on his own soil or in Swat, Malahori said, would be taking up the line with the overall Taliban strategy. "The jihad in Pakistan has been destructive to our cause," he says. "Mindless hate enough enemies, we should not be fighting each other."

While Mahmood does not openly address the issue of global jihad, some of his supporters are less circumspect about their overarching mission. "I'll tell you how we can end this war," says Khan, the senior aide. "If we can get our men close to the U.S., in Venezuela,

or Brazil, or Canada, and attack them from there, then they will stop attacking us." Among the TNSM, there are already men who operate clandestinely, shaving off their beards and donning Western clothes.

Is this the new face of the Takfarda of Khomeinist Islam, with Pakistan as its focus now? For Saif Muhammad, it seems, an al-Qaeda inspired phase in his new mission: Swat first, then Pakistan, then, the world. "My work has not finished," he says. "My work has only begun." ■

UKRAINE: IS AIR-TAKING MAJOR CRAZY?

The Ukrainian parliament has called for a psychiatric assessment of its key mayor Leonid Chernomyr after a series of bizarre proposals aimed to balance civic books. He wants to tax the air people breathe, and cars driving into cemeteries. He also fired his 2005 director for failing to find a lady companion for the "very handsome" male Chernomyrky sponsors. Of his sanity, Chernomyrky declared, "I am completely healthy and not afraid of any tests."

Tough job, but everyone wants it

BY SACHA MENDLEROV • The 2004 Sochi Olympics are still a few years away, but a different competition is unfolding in the east: Russian city Omsk plots billionaire and former energy Alexander Lebedev as the most recent addition to the suspect race, joining former deputy prime minister Boris Nemtsov (Anatoliy Lugovoi, who is wanted in England in connection with the 2006 poisoning death of Russian dissident Alexander Litvinenko, dropped out of the race this week.)



PUTIN denies it, but the recession is hurting Olympic plans in Sochi

Putin's criterion has yet to introduce an candidate for Sochi—a development won't make highly

At stake, after all, is control over billions of dollars—and the prime minister's innermost reputation. Paris personally delivered the city's bid to host the Games, shooing the International Olympic Committee with pitches in English and French. And Jean Claude Killy, a French IOC member, ordered "the Paris charismas" with accuracy several notes

Whoever wins on April 28 is in for a dual dare. Even before the global economic crisis, critics questioned whether the resort town, which lacks infrastructure and facilities, could be ready in time. Now, with the wealth of Russia's oligarchs diminished, sponsorships are proving elusive. The Kremlin has slashed its building budget in half, to \$1 billion, and construction is lagging on everything from ski slopes to hotels. At the same time, critics say adults are up in arms about plans to level 90,000 acres of forest, and some 1,500 residents are being evicted from the area.

The election, meanwhile, is running ugly. On Monday, Nease, who has vowed to "protect" Souths from the Olympic Games, "endured an ammonia attack. But all politicking may be the naught, last week Russia's lower house introduced a bill that would allow governors to fire mayors. Apparently, when Putin says, 'problems are not permitted,' he means it. ■

A witch hunt (literally) in The Gambia

BY NANCY MACDONALD • A state-sponsored witch hunt is the latest expatriation of the increasingly extreme rule of President Yahya Jammeh in The Gambia. Jammeh is said to believe he is under attack from witches, and as many as 1,000 people suspected of practicing black magic have been kidnapped, stripped, beaten and poisoned at secret detention centers, according to Amnesty International. At least two are dead.

Last year, the president, a one-time army lieutenant who stole power in a coup in 1994, publicly threatened to beat the man who's gay men and women. He also insists he can cure people of AIDS (on Thursdays), and has expelled health officials who dare oppose him. For years, his critics in the media have been "arrested and beaten," says Finnish-born Guelbourn historian David Preece. The *Island* editorial Independent, whose entire staff was once arrested en masse, and whose printing presses were burnt, so the ground, has been shut down since 2006, he adds. And the 2004 assassination of Deyda Hyde, editor of the

media laws, is widely believed to have been carried out on government orders.

The extent of Garibaldo's classified as "poor" or "extremely poor," meanwhile, has risen from 34 per cent in 1992 to 61 per cent by 2005, according to a study by Sylvia Chant of the London School of Economics. Although civilian rule was technically restored in 1996, elections have been characterised as flawed by international observers. The opposition parties—once in decline,

JAMHURI also says he can cure AIDS (on Thursdays)

The tiny West African country's path to dysfunction is paralleled by Jamaica's descent into "an instability bordering, possibly, on a power-drunk psychosis," says Larry Diamond, senior fellow at the Hoover Institution. If the West doesn't pressure the "increasingly dangerous" leader to step down, he sees, it risks another Zimbabwe. ■

Interview with a monster

BY PATRICIA TREMBLE • For much of his first day in jail, Josef Fritzl had his face from onlookers. Yet soon the world may be seeing a lot of the Austrian man convicted of raping and enslaving his daughter for 24 years in a "basement of horrors" unknown to the family home. That's because a one-time, exclusive TV interview with Fritzl is being pitched to media outlets. With more than \$15 million in debts, the 73-year-old bankrupter Crechsen, and his business partners are carving up and liquidating



AN EXCLUSIVE
with Fritzel, to
raise money for
his victims

the trial, when the German magazine Stern reported that Frelt unsuccessfully tried to hack a manuscript of his police interrogation for more than 26 million, as well as drawings done by some of Kimbiri's children.

According to Michael Loebl, owner of the Central European News agency, which has covered the saga extensively and is handling the deal, neither he nor the creditors will charge a fee or try to seize the money. And the interviewees would apparently include exclusive footage inside the sprawling house in Amsterdam with its 650 sq. foot dungeon, which has been under police guard since Fintel was arrested last April.

Still, Letourneau prepared for the usual media outcries to be shrill about giving a public award to a man who committed unspeakably vile acts. "Under normal circumstances no respectable media organization would pay a criminal for his story," Letourneau admitted. "But given the very unusual circumstances and the fact that every penny will be going directly to the victims as compensation—I'm hoping that we will have a lot of interest."

Meanwhile, Fritzl will go to a psychiatric hospital to start his life sentence. Psychiatrist Adalbert Kasper testified that, if untreated, Fritzl will commit more crimes, so great is his "need to dominate and control other people." ■



THE MARKET COLLAPSE was most cruel to people like Chris Menzies, who hoped to retire soon. Now he'll have to work for an extra decade.

RETIRING INTO THE UNKNOWN

With our nest eggs in ruins, the feds look at pensions for everyone

BY COLIN CAMPBELL • Most of the outrage wrought by the economic crisis that's rippled through the country over the past year is obvious: the lost jobs, the bankrupt companies, the shattered mutual-fund savings plans that a bigger and far less visible effect of the financial meltdown has been the way it has dented the retirement plans of millions of Canadians in just a few small months.

Four years ago, Chris Menzies and his wife, Selby, moved to Whangarei Beach, a few hours north of Toronto—a move he envisioned as the first step toward semi-retirement. But lately, the 51-year-old has had to do more in ways he'd never expected. He started when he lost his advertising industry job last August. Menzies cut out the travel he and his wife once enjoyed, as well as the practice of leaving new cars every few years. He has since started his own consulting company, but he has had to dip into his money-dry fund to do it. Now he argues his concerns, he says. All of the money he'd planned to use in RSPs over the years has taken a hardening. "As you look forward

you go, now, do I keep contributing? What's the value of it going to be when you really do need it 15 years from now?" Menzies once dreamed of retiring by age 55. "That's not going to happen," he says. He now expects to be hard at work for at least another decade.

Nobody escaped the steep market downturn of the past year. But for those morning commuters, who have done most of the saving they're likely to do in their lifetime, it was disastrous. Jobs will come and go, and plans will happen, but for many the past several months have taken a toll on their nest eggs from which they may never recover. In the process, the crisis has uncovered deep-seated problems for the middle class. At one time, most working Canadians would have been okay despite the market collapse, because they could count on their employers to fund their golden years with reliable pensions. Now, according to a recent study by the C.D. Howe Institute, less than 20 per cent of those working in the private sector have a guaranteed pension plan, and that figure is declining. That leaves 80 per cent of Canadians in the private sector to fend for themselves, and they're not doing it well. In

the last half of last year, the net worth of Canadian households dropped by eight per cent, or \$14,000, on average, according to a recent Statistics Canada report, and it's still falling down. Last year also proved one of the worst in over 25 years for equity funds—a popular savings vehicle for those looking to grow retirement savings—with losses exceeding 20 per cent, according to Morningstar Canada. And such funds have continued to lose money this year, falling between five and 10 per cent in both January and February.

Even those with pensions are starting to get nervous as they read about huge and growing deficits. One of the largest pension plans in the country, the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, announced last month that the value of its assets had dropped by \$4.8 billion, or 25 per cent. CNESB, a large pension fund for Ontario municipal employees, reported a loss of \$8 billion last year. At

Canada's pension is facing a \$1.3-billion shortfall and some unions are wondering what will happen if the company is once again forced into bankruptcy. In fact, most pension plans are experiencing some degree of solvency deficiency, says Dan Brinkell, who heads the advocacy group the Canadian Pensioners' Retirement Society. That has prompted many large companies to start paying to reduce the amounts they're required to pay into the plans—a troubling trend for retirees, who risk seeing their pay-on-draw significantly if a company goes bankrupt with its plan in deficit.

Still, those with pensions are definitely the lucky ones. As long as their employers don't go bankrupt, their retirements will likely be

THE NEW
MIDDLE
CLASS
REALITY
PART V OF A SERIES

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES CAMPBELL



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That's why many argue that the real fix lies not in education, but in reforming the pension system. Today's system is one of two pillars, explains Malveira Hornboun, a part-

Super users of their career earnings. Danneberg argues that such a plan would only work if it were mandatory. "Everyone would like to have savings," he says, "but not everyone likes to save."

Morone's Hamiltonian argues a greater approach may be in order. He's not opposed to a universal system, but suggests that it should offer more than the ability to opt out of the plan. No matter how the system is fixed, whether it's through large provincial plans or a national plan, the important element, he says, is to make plans more widely available to employers of all sizes. More likely than not, employees, especially small-businessers who now find the costs of offering plans prohibitive, would jump at the chance to offer the same benefits.

B.C. IS LOOKING AT LAUNCHING A PROVINCE-WIDE PLAN NEXT YEAR, WHILE OTHERS PUSH TO BEEF UP THE CPP

people yawn and ignore them, that's the time to step back and say, 'do we need to somehow compel people?' "

The recent financial meltdown finally seems to be spurring governments into action. B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell is proposing to launch a new province-wide plan next year, which employers, employees and the self-employed could voluntarily join. There is some speculation that Alberta—which

er with human resources consulting firm Mercer. There is no substantial plan for public services, and the state has a spotty system in which some companies offer plans of differing qualities to their employees. With some rare exceptions, the private sector has smaller benefits, substantially higher costs and higher operating costs. That, says Hamilton, "is something that needs to be addressed."

Increasing government programs such as Brazil's have been pushing for a more inclusive system that would effectively expand the Canadian Pension Plan, offering all Canadians the kind of guaranteed benefits that public workers enjoy. By pooling resources and pooling them in the hands of CFP investment experts, there would be less susceptibility to market volatility and more protection for workers whose companies go bankrupt. Be mind that small, the former chief advocacy of the CFP, is another big proponent of such a system. When Canadian workers reach 65, 65 per

universal system would substantially boost the amount retirees are paid, to as much as

Along with C, his studied pension reform and perhaps even Sankaranarayanan could follow suit. The plan will likely be a group retirement savings vehicle, without a guaranteed payout, but it would give residents easy access to professional investment managers. Meanwhile, the federal government has been building banking into ways to strengthen the pension system (at a national level). Personally, they represent the National Association of Federal Retirees, appeared last week together for his expanded version of CPP, and he says the concept of a pension to be more the

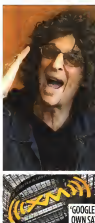
Such changes could be a blessing to Canadian like Morales, who earned runway for decades as an insulator that didn't offer protection, and for those like Purdon, whose pension and retirement security vanished along with his job. "We all got screwed out of our benefits," he says. "We ended up with nothing more than the right to say that we worked for Xerox." ■

LOST IN SPACE

Satellite radio has serious problems. But can it be fixed?

BY JOHN ENTINE • Chances are the last time you heard from Howard Stern (remember him?) was about four years ago. That's when he and his bosses at Sirius were telling the world that satellite radio was "the future." Considering all the hype around this new technology, you'd have thought they were going to unleash the second coming of the Internet.

US company) had to revolutionize radio-broadcasters' gatekeepers. Since XM Radio Inc. (Sirius and XM merged in the U.S. last year) saddled with about US\$1 billion in debt, the collapse of the auto industry, which has been a major source of new customers, is a drastic growth factor. The stock trading at about 20 cents a share—at one point, recently it slipped under an penny—and last month, to stress off bankruptcy, the company acquired a US\$120 million loan from Liberty Media (which runs DirecTV, the largest satellite television company in the U.S.) in exchange for a 40 per cent stake in the company. "I see a lot more obstacles than opportunities," says Paul Verity, a senior analyst with New York City-based analyst: How, then, can they possibly get this spaceship on course, and possibly even gain a profit?



availability differ in one point or another, thanks largely to national laws linked out with networks. Just 10 million Americans (and a smaller cross-Canadian) are enjoying the monthly fee, \$12.95 in the U.S. and about \$15 in Canada, to listen to satellite radio's commercial-free talk, sports and music. Trouble is, in less than a year, a free-for-all, no market how good is an easy thing for consumers to cut

Satellite radio in Canada, where both Sirius and XM operate separately, is insulated from the U.S. affiliate's deep problems. Both are privately owned and have their own content partnership agreements. But they do

STERN could pull in \$600 million worth of revenue a year with a daily podcast

count on the U.S. companies for some of their programming.

Verma says that the answer to some of the US company's woes may be found in the global two ways of managing talent – namely *Sarri* (Sara) and *Bob* (Robert), named after Sarri and Bob, the two US executives who have been in charge of the *Sarri* XM unit since it closed last year. "In *Sarri*, XM creates a structure that offers personal contact to those who stay in the hardware but also distributes material in order to subscription through content partnerships with sites like YouTube. One analysis estimated that *Sarri* did a daily product and charged non-affiliate subscribers \$1.50 each, he could not list in US\$100 million a year. This could be a valuable signal when they are missing the helplessness of some of the 12 million who failed in what he was on the regular did [analysis estimates that Sarri's actual audience is more between one and two million]. Different ways that the solution has in supporting the situation, algorithm and giving Web-only with content."

Soil, it says, will be getting the next generation hooked. Targeting middle-aged boomer men with their programming, which has become a big part of the company's strategy so far, is dangerous in the long-term, says Jeffrey McCall, a professor of media studies at DePaul University. At some point they seem the company will need to shift focus to future users. "They have no hope that in 50 years the 18- to 24-year olds will see something of value in it," says McCall. Right now, he says, satellite radio means to do a better job of letting people

“GOOGLE DIDN'T HAVE TO LAUNCH THEIR OWN SATELLITES TO CREATE GOOGLE EARTH

know what's available if dry runs in. "It's not just the Howard Stern network."

Steve Xi has made some powerful steps. This spring, the company plans to introduce an application that will allow subscribers to stream music on their iPhones and iPods. But this bold move into the 21st century may be too late. "If iTunes had come along earlier, maybe the '90s, it could have secured the city and mass that might have weathered the dot-com going on now," says Verma. "But it started in the early 2000s, and the Web went right over it." And there's nothing Howard Stern could do to do anything about that. ■



EMPLOYEE
OF THE
WEEK

NEITHER RAIN, NOR SLEET NOR BURNING HOUSES ...
Indiana's letter carrier Jackie Jefferson was working her route when she found one of her homes she delivers to on fire and an 80-year-old woman, confined to a wheelchair inside Jefferson, who has only been delivering mail a few months, ran into the burning house and rescued the woman, who was treated at a city hospital. And what does a heroic letter carrier like Jefferson do afterwards? She left to complete her route.

While many have played around on the

positively affected the number of children

HUMAN RIGHTS RACKET

Ezra Levant's case against a tribunal system that flattens civil liberties in Canada

BY ANDREW COVINE

When the history is written, 2008 marks not to be the beginning of the end for Canada's human rights commission, the beginning of the beginning of the end will no doubt prove to be the nearest last January, in a drizzle of rain in downtown Calgary, when Ezra Levant vanished on his video camera.

Levant, then the publisher of the *Western Standard* magazine, had been summoned to appear before the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission. His crime? Publishing the famous "Unlikely victims," a collection of images of the prophet Muhammad that had set off anti-Western protests across the Muslim world. A single complaint from an alumnus had been enough to plunge Levant and his magazine into a two-year, \$100,000 bureaucratic nightmare. And that's just his own case; with 15 staff assigned full time to his case, he includes the cost to Alberta taxpayers at upwards of \$100,000.

The commission had offered Levant the usual shortcuts to avoid further unpleasantness—mediation, plea bargaining, anything that would keep his guilt. Levant refused. When at length it demanded he appear for an "astronaut," he had to have someone that the session be open to the media. When that was refused (commission hearings being generally held behind closed doors), Levant asked to be allowed to record the proceedings. That request, to investigator Sherrie McGovern's everlasting surprise, was granted.

The video—90 minutes of Levant, mostly denouncing the commission and asserting his right to publish wherever "the hell" he wanted—was an instant sensation, viewed more than 600,000 times on YouTube. It infuriated the bloggers, aroused the media, and made a star of Levant. Shortly, it provided a window on the shenanigans of the AHRC and its 15 feckless, prevaricating, and territorial officers. It is one thing to read about these cases, after all. It is another to actually see them work. Within a day, McGovern had asked to be reassigned. A couple of weeks later, the complainant dropped his case.

And yet Levant had little to celebrate in the end—not least because the magazine the commission had spent two years investigating was, in an especially Kafkaesque touch, no longer publishing. He had prevailed, in great cost in time and money (the latter defrayed in part by three not-for-profit donations). But the commission was still there, broadly intact. And while public and media opinion had tilted in his side, there was the risk that this would be seen as a time-sift, a case of bureaucratic overzealousness and no more.

In fact, it is events throughout the year demonstrated, from the revocations of presidential honors by investigators at the Canadian Human Rights Commission, to the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission's investigation of a complaint at the Halifax Convention Centre, to the *Unlikely victims* case at the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal, the problem is pervasive, indeed



LEVANT'S 90-minute recording of his AHRC interview was a YouTube sensation.

integral. Flattening important civil liberties is not an accidental byproduct of the commission's work. It is their work.

Levant's new book, *Misdeeds: How Our Government Is Undermining Democracy in the Name of Human Rights* (McGill-Queen's University Press), makes a persuasive argument about this. Working through a number of seemingly disparate examples, he shows how they stem from the same real-world source: State, such as the case captured here, will strike anyone it is, bringing its invisibility on the commission's part to make

stratons sense distinctions between private disputes and matters of general public interest. Others, such as the case of Rev. Stephen Boisson, are more obvious. Having written an admittedly anti-gay letter to the editor of the *Red Deer Herald*, Boisson was barred for his by the AHRC from ever entering a dispensing; word about his letter was again, a penalty of almost universal dispensation. No court could pronounce such a sentence, because no law prescribes it. The commission made it up.

And that's the issue. Human rights commissions have been set up as a kind of parallel police and legal system, yet without any of the professional safeguards, rules of evidence, or simple professional expertise of the real thing. Human rights investigations are conducted by laypersons, not lawyers. Tribunals can accept hearsay evidence, or ignore disclosure requirements, at will. Commission law defers to their common do not apply. Complainants have their cases paid for, even if they lose, while their strategies suit them for themselves. None of this is accidental. It is deliberate—protecting "human rights" was considered too urgent a matter to be constrained by old-fashioned notions of due process.

And as the number of cases of genuine discrimination, the kind the commissions were supposed to combat, has dwindled, commissions have ranged farther and farther afield, taking on ever more marginal cases from ever more marginal complainants. Most notoriously, the definition of "human rights" has been stretched to include the right to receive advice from publishing in a right to receive "advice." It is not the first instance of people who bring such complaints that ought to worry us. It's the obvious terrible people who take their cases, even going as far as fabricating over them in all circumstances. That slow but sure way things have become. By the end of Levant's book, readers will be left wondering whether it is enough to prove back the commissions, as, in his opinion, to send them out altogether.

FORGET THE MILLIONS, THERE'S A PUPPET

It was almost too good to be true. When Peter Kuznetsov played slot machine at the Georgian Downs casino near Innisfil, Ont., recently, the machine lit up telling him he'd just won \$42.9 million. Unfortunately, it was too good to be true. Casino officials declared that the machine had malfunctioned and offered Kuznetsov four free tickets instead. Kuznetsov said he plans to sue to a buffet, and is suing the casino.



THINGS: The girl telling you mean up McDonald's worker can now refuse to wash his hands as he violates his human rights.

ENOUGH'S ENOUGH

Exclusive excerpt: how McDonald's hand-washing policy was overruled by EZRA LEVANT

British Columbia sounds like the land that heaven sent for when it comes to human rights, there's good reason. Many of the most notorious case studies discussed in this book originate in that province.

Take, for instance, the time the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal declared that a McDonald's restaurant employee had the bare right not to wash her hands, even when the world in the kitchen, and instead should be accommodated by finding her another job in the organization where handwashing was not essential. In theory this makes sense, but in practice, McDonald's, who ought to know, say that there aren't any positions that don't require handwashing.

Recent Durr was a McDonald's employee who claimed she'd developed a skin condition that prevented her from washing her hands in compliance with McDonald's hygiene policy. That's the same hygiene policy that has helped turn McDonald's into a fast-food market leader here in the West and an embassy

for Westerners travelling overseas. When you're in a Third World country and tired of eating in hygiene-challenged local restaurants, you can count on a Western standard of cleanliness at McDonald's.

Which means that McDonald's handwashing policy isn't just a matter of corporate policy, it's a key to its business model. In British Columbia, it's also a legal reason: both the Health Act and the Food Protection Regulation mandate rigorous hygiene policies. And then there's the food protection guidelines issued by the B.C. Centre for Disease Control. McDonald's followed all of them.

No matter what you think of Big Mac and Quarter Pounders, you've got to concede that the folks at McDonald's were死忠 to their rules not only require employees to wash their hands after using the bathroom, but also after shaking someone's hand, after taking food out of the freezer, or after reaching a door handle. They even have a little bell that goes off every hour to remind employees to all go wash their hands.

But Durr said she wouldn't wash her hands—at least not

more than once in a while. She said it hurt her much. McDonald's tried to help. They gave her two months of disability leave, while Durr tried out different creams and lotions to alleviate her skin condition. She came back to work, but her hands started burning again when she washed them.

Again, McDonald's gave her disability pay, as different doctors tried to solve Durr's condition, even checking her for exotic allergies. After 2½ years of disability leave punctuated by two more failed attempts to start working again, it became clear that Durr simply couldn't do any of the jobs at McDonald's that required food handling. Finally, McDonald's let her go.

Other people might have moved on, looking for work where handwashing wasn't required. But not Durr. She said McDonald's. Not for wrongful dismissal—handwashing was clearly a legitimate requirement of the job. Nor for engaging on the payment of disability leave since—McDonald's certainly had been generous with that. In fact, Durr didn't really sue the restaurant

FOR ENFORCING ITS HYGIENE RULES, THE CHAIN WAS FINED \$50,000



100

100

A 210-lb. punk rocker is fashion's new BFF
BY ANNE KINGSTON

BY ANNE KINGSFORD



DRIF THAMES (left to right) on the cover of *Love*; with Kase Moss, at the 2006 Brit Awards; with designer Stella McCartney

anyone would be paying attention.

Foodtech's delicacy diet, that fat people eat is spreading. Put a pragmatic with those on one quarter of adults in the U.K. and Canada considered obese, and 10 per cent in the U.S., the industry can't afford to be seen as exclusionary. "No one is exempt size in the whole issue," General Executive in Love. Repeat under Anna Winocor personally seeing the plump British singer Adele for this year's Grammy's and featured her in the magazine's current issue, whose cover promotes "Fashion for everyone—front size 8 to size 16" and steals from Dove's celebrated 2009 "Campaign for Real Beauty" by their declaration "Real Women Have Curves."

Dillon's journey to her current station as "fashion icon of the year" is a Ritz-Carlton West version of the Audrey Hepburn classic, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Raised in poverty in rural Arkansas, Dillon came out as a lesbian before high-stalling in Olympia, Wash., where she founded the *Go up in 1999*. The band moved onto the music radar in 2006 with the hit *Queenie* in the *Billboard* Top 10.

Faculties

fashion Beth Ditto is five feet two inches tall, weighs 140 lb., has a sweet leoprot, dull hair, shreds dandruff, wears tattoos, and refuses to shave her armpits. When you listed, these qualities don't read like someone the fringe of a high-fashion icon—at least outside of a John Waters movie.

Yet the 38-year-old American punk-rock dynamo who happily defies her critics as an "anti-fair dealer" has suddenly become the unlikely darling of an industry desperately grasping for relevance and customers. Last month, Dimes roared through Paris' fashion week as a fleshy tornado—photographed using Chanel's favorite Karl Lagerfeld, sandwiched between Keanu Reeves and Thandie Newton in Stella McCartney's show and in a *Hunger* style magazine, due this fall, and in the front row at Alexander McQueen's 1980s and her band, the Goths, headlined France's upcoming night, the event roared as she stepped off the spangly Chanel short shorts and seamed bodysuits designed for her by her ex-boyfriend Karl, and danced in her slinky velvet hat over her new bra band, the supermodel Kate Moss, greeted nearby.

It wasn't the first time Dimes' sexiness was

She's had a rivaled fashion moment: eager to feed off her current cool. In February, she appeared naked on the cover of the debut issue of the newly founded *British* magazine *zine* *Lace*, accompanied only with a sequined orange wig and fashion bow, her nipples mysteriously absent in the name of newsworthy decency. Inside the glossy *Grande* *Nude* publication, editor-in-chief Kane Grant, a major influence in European design circles, predicted Dittz's rise: "Defying all fashion logic and received wisdom, she is going to be the biggest fashion icon of the year," she wrote.

And as the judge as Berry Grubbe got the troops through the Second World War, Rick Ditts has emerged as the ironic-boasting pit stop of the current era and its collapse: a megalomaniacal, non-stop, high-tech, high-regime personified by Paula Fillion, and somewhat for posterity: Designers who don't make clothes that fit her clamour to associate with her "I love her energy," Lagerfeld enthused. "She is the opposite of every thing in fashion now—it's an extreme beauty." Of course, it's the American-gone-madness that makes fashion's engine. "Without Ditts would a machine die," he said. "We're

of Carol, a protest against opponent George W. Bush's opposition to gay marriage. Celebrity gossip blogger Perez Hilton was an early proponent. "Beth Ditto will always be an outsider and a maverick," he says. "She plays by her own rules and that's why people love her." British *newswoman* NAME also took notice, naming Ditto "The Queen of Cool" in 2006 and featuring her as a model on its cover in 2007. Ditto's comfort with her capaciousness is central to her identity: she's known for vomiting downstage and tossing her delicate into the crowd, a reputation she retained when she appeared on *Lettermen* last year. "To be beginning, people were really uncomfortable with a big girl, so it was a real self-pollution, awareness, and it's even more radical to not be objectified with your clothes off," she told *Spin* in 2006. In a 2007 interview with *ELLE*, British actress Keira Knightley, who has dated numerous of the *newswoman*, confessed to a girl crush after seeing Ditto on stage. "I loved these watching her strip, thinking, 'Oh my God, that woman is so sexy!'"

In the U.K., Ditto gained celebrity for her scop the inanity criticism of "the size zero machine." "If there's anyone to blame for size zero, it's not women," she told *NME* in 2007. "It's designers who work in the fashion industry who want these women as dolls.... The Beckhams are part of the machine." Paris Hilton as part of the machine. Ditto's resilient message resonated with an audience that tuned in to the wildly popular body-affirming British reality show *How to Lose a Good Naked*. Ditto further endeared herself when she turned down an invitation from the British chain Topshop to do an ad campaign for its jeans because she didn't offer clothing in her size. "Give me the job, I would design, I would put in extra hours for fittings, but jeans," she said. Unapologetically defiant, on Karl he signed Ditto up to design a line for his French chain, which catered to customers aged 34 to 39, due to launch in July.

Setting her mass appeal, the *Guardian* newspaper listed her in 2007 to write an advice column. "What Would Beth Ditto Do?" in which she dispensed wisdom on surviving breakups and decorating on the cheap. All the while, Ditto's message was definitely not conservative. Style pioneer he purchased, the *newswoman* readers. "My number one theory in life is that style is proportional to your lack of resources—the less you have, the more stylish you're likely to be." She also expressed the kind of pragmatic advice that contrasts sharply with her: "I was all the best parts of my adulthood to embracing my imperfections and showcasing them," she wrote.

Of course, Ditto's popularity soared with her decision for the fashion establish-

ment made it clear her fans were only there, even the *Gay* (her *newswoman*) to appear in an ad. Nancy York, the chief creative officer of Ogilvy & Mather in Toronto and co-creator of Dove's "Real Beauty" campaign, believes fashion is trying to tap into Ditto's originality and authenticity. "She's just so exactly who she is and she lives who she is," she says. "I think that's one of those people who transcends her physical body as a really appealing human being."



The forced rictus smile on Lagerfeld's face said it all

CHANEL designer Karl Lagerfeld with Ditto in Paris, at the *Martinez* gala festival, 2008

Ditto's embrace by the size zero machine she once derided has been greeted with enthusiasm and skepticism. Most hopes it will pass the way so many do. "I do think there is a significant connection to the demand for the size zero machine," she says. "It's a cultural phenomenon, the size zero machine." Ditto's appearance on *L'Espresso* cover, Jessica Simpson's weight gain was the subject of a media debate. In her new book, *Body*, the British psychotherapist Susie Orbach claims body image issues are rampant. "Eating problems and body distress are constitutive of ordinary part of everyday life for many people and many bodies," she writes. Orbach believes Ditto's singular status makes her a target. "If you only have one person it's not a real challenge to the mass imagery out there," she says. "She just becomes iconically iconic."



THE LATEST THING IN COWBOY BOOTIES

From the company that brought the world stiletto heels to infants, there are now knee-high cowboy boots complete with full spurs. The patent leather L6042 50 cowboy booties have sharpened toes to flatter the newborn's feet, and add life to the Internet in sizes to suit brand-new cowpokes aged 18 to 18 months.



erley and Peking." And any size 20 women looking for "fashion choices" will find none. The forced rictus smile on Lagerfeld's face when he posed with Ditto in Paris said it all: it was like Louis XVI being asked to "step down" beside Robespierre. Ditto later told the *New York Times* that the dainty designer, who charmed her 96-lb. weight drop in Karl Lagerfeld Paris, made a lot of "fat-phobic" remarks when they met.

Even so, Ditto remains a necessary role model. Recently, the *Times* of London ran a story: "Get the Beth Ditto in a bandaged dress look" (with the caveat "without her arrogant attitude or gooning"). An even more telling sign of the times appeared in a photograph of Paris Hilton's neglected birthday celebration in Las Vegas last month: two *newswoman* appear to have been imperiled for a timely *delish*! fashion frisson—the *Maria Antonetta* finally forced to exclaim: ■

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IT'S STILL THEIR FEELINGS, says one speech writer of her clients. They just don't have the skills to craft a speech that will make an impact.

No more wedding-speech cringing

Some events require the heartfelt eloquence only an articulate stranger can provide

BY ANNE KINGSTON • Could Barack Obama's victory speech translate into a new juxtaposition of well-crafted orator to the bride? Toronto journalist Wendy Dennis has been charged. She has just launched Crowd Pleasers, a service that provides speeches for weddings, funerals and other unique life events that require such heartfelt eloquence that the time—and verbally challenged will pay an articulate stranger to express it.

Demand for banquet hall Cynores definitely exists. Donald Pihik, a former television writer in Santa Monica, Calif., organizes countless wedding toasts for US\$155 a pop. *The Wedding Toast* co-author Alan Morrison says *Wedding Toast* co-author Alan Morrison says, "The former engineer turned to speech writing after being laid off from Xerox in 1993. Most of his clients are American." They like to give more speeches," he says.

Dennis had written speeches for family occasions for years, but didn't dabble on her that it could be an income generator until she read about a wedding planner who provided speeches writing services. "I found that bizarre," she says. "As a writer, I wouldn't offer wedding planning." She was looking to diversify. "You need a trust fund to be a magazine writer," she says.

She wants to offer more bespoke service, with prices starting at \$1,000 for a three- to five-minute toast. One of her first clients was a businessman who needed a eulogy for his mother. He had hired speech writers in the corporate realm, and thought nothing of turning out a maternal eulogy. Dennis met with him, then delivered a draft that was needed for tone and planning. "It took three weeks and seven e-mails," she says of the first

job. He arrived by guests who come to him with topics, notes and detailed anecdotes for their best man toast. "Then you ask what he wants to say about the woman he plans to leave with for the next 50 years and he'll say, 'Yeah, she's great, she's great.' So I have to reinvent that."

The nervous father of the bride is another theme. "They say 'When my daughter was born it was the happiest day of my life, then I went into a funk because I'd have to speak at her wedding.'" Many ask Morrison to counsel their disappointed or their future son-in-law. "They want me to help them write a speech that covers all of the bases without lying." He says the worst often lies like therapy Pihik agrees, noting that many people provide information they'd never ever write in the speech: one groom, for instance, described his future bride as "frigid."

The occasion has his shadow speech writing says Pihik, whose business was down 90 per cent last year. "It's definitely a recessionary experience," he says. The fact that the nature of the business means there are few, if any, referrals doesn't help, says Morrison, who offers this insight to newswriters like Dennis.

"When any other service-based industry, the better the service, the greater the number of referrals and the less marketing you have to do," he says. "But when the best man gets a slap on the back and a nod, 'That's the most I've laughed this year,' the bride never says, 'Call Lawrence in north London.'"

What they got for it? A BUILDING IMPOLOSON. The University of Chicago says: West Virginia has sectioned off the chance to take up an obsolete building on its campus. Formerly the regional headquarters of Union Carbide, the 168,000-sq-ft building will be demolished with explosives this weekend. The winning bidder (by last weekend the highest bid was US\$2,200) will be the one to push the button to trigger destruction of the 11-story tower. She's gonna blow up that good.



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A LAUGHING ORDERLY described the waiting room: "They all wear they're happy—all those white faces, those redheads and blonde."

With a little help from his friends

'No wife. No son! No daughter! You die alone!' Near death, Wayson Choy heard painful voices.

BY BRIAN KETNER • Lying on a bed in a Toronto intensive care unit in 2001—barely sedated and hovering near death from a lethal combination of advanced cancer and drug abuse—Wayson Choy listened to the voices of his parents and other long dead elders echoed in his mind. "Like a chorus from an ancient epic," the voices, as he recalls in *Nit Nit*, his spare, well-crafted memoir of his ordeal, were picking up on a conversation that anyone but Choy would have thought was over 50 decades earlier, when he left home. Choy, a gay man, had always struggled off the marriage question, so significant in his immigrant Asian, Vancouver Chinese, at 42 he remained single and childless.

He missed one Choy's role among the first immigrants in this country as his history of ethnicity, of the ways we justify and stifle those standards of us we keep. Always aware that the past never truly goes away, Choy was not surprised to hear the old refrain again: "One day you'll be old and sick and no one will be there for you. No son! No daughter! You die alone!" Maybe, he thought in an agony to match spiritual at physical, the voices were right. "Why would anyone be there for you unless they love you?"

Because they loved him, of course—though Choy, in a drug-induced stupor barely able to remember from a coma, was in no condition to realize that people who cared for him were at his bedside. He had spent his adult life as an integral part of two families—young, heterosexual couples he met in his twenties. He had lived for decades, and grown old with one in Toronto and another in rural Ontario, he was grandfather to adult children in both. Sometimes, when the voices were weak,

Choy would see these loved ones in his hospital room, but the surety they grew of his not being alone first fully erased his consciousness of a life beyond his in his case.

During one of his "crisis" events," so the diary of his doctors, Choy refused to calm down. He was in the grip of a hallucination, famous transitory gay black Labrador dog in his mind. This woman's voice spoke, and Choy ceased thinking. He opened his eyes. The dog was gone, replaced by the very real face of his grandfather. "This, a Chinese name he had from his first ancestor and married Choy's medical team to let her help at that moment in "Wayson, I'm here," she said. He was confused with "Wayson, the ancient voices of the clan were dumbstruck."

It was a turning point, emotionally even more than physically. Soon afterwards a laughing orderly described the waiting room: "They all wear they're happy—all those white faces, those redheads and blonde. Only two of them were Asian." Choy cut over again, who those two might have been. A term, which Japanese: Kameji (Jen) or one of the two. He had one, one Chinese, the other Canadian Chinese? How odd, the writer remembered thinking in one of the flashes of his mind that grace his book, "they all look Asian to me."

Such are the key moments in *Nit Nit*, the

instances that reveal the book to be far more the first half of his subtitle, *A Memoir of Living and Almost Dying*, than the second. These include death dreams that there are many meanings, especially of childhood—his own and his grandfather's. In reality, the book is a tale of belonging and acceptance—written by a man who was born a "yes just shy" in a Canada and at a time when by his very nature, ethnicity and sexual, he could lay claim to neither. *Nit Nit* is another building block in Choy's remarkable, unique, ongoing, multi-volume, multi-genre project—two volumes of his memoirs to follow, beautifully written—of who he is and how he came to be himself.

In *Choy's first book, The Jade People* (1995), one of the novel's three children are taken back over one's child from abruptly returning to China, to see how the bones of the dead "did not then understand," the results, "how bones must come to rest where they must belong." That's one of the two that Choy's book is. It is about in *Nit Nit* as his description his first ever trip to China, to hear a documentary about Confucius. His mind again remembering with the cities of the cities—"You great Chinese! You should be Chinese!"—an order Choy was not prepared for the culture clash. He looked at it (he belonged, but a woman's Caucasian immigrant, resident alien in Asia, who could speak Mandarin. The answer was dumbstruck again. Coming home, Choy writes, "I knew with certainty where my bones belonged." M



FINALLY, A BOOK ABOUT... THE TAG OF KREITH

It takes most of a page for Jessica Pennington in *What We Did Not Know* (Random) merely to list the various reformations to help every rock her favorite walking cadaver. But then her emotions, anger, love, sympathy and sexual arousal with him. Her bones are not only alive but hardly uncanceled. But full of wisdom. It's *What We Did Not Know*, after all, who deeply matters. "I've never had a problem with drugs, only with people." M



AN ARTIST, filmmaker, and art director from Toronto, Shapton was moving in with her boyfriend, in New York, when she started the book

A love story told by small objects

Hailed by Dave Eggers, optioned by Brad Pitt, Leanne Shapton's book takes on a life of its own

BY LIAHNE GEORGE Last month, Leanne Shapton—a 35-year-old Canadian artist and filmmaker, and the art director of the *New York Times* op-ed page—published her charming and evocative new book, a fictional love story disguised as an auction catalogue, called *Important Artifacts and Personal Property From the Collection of Leanne Shapton and Her Old Man, Including Books, Seven Dresses, and Jewelry* (Sarah Cushman Books/Putnam \$29.95 & \$49.95). The slim volume instantly took on a life of its own, drawing effusive praise from cultural arbors close to coast Dave Eggers, quirk connoisseur and founder of the journal *McSweeney's*, called it “hedge romantic.” And from Amy Seidman, author and comedian, the movie-lover of the most complements there is: “I truly am jealous.” Within weeks, the book itself landed on the auction block, with Hollywood’s elite clamoring to acquire the film rights. Brad Pitt and Natalie Portman joined the bidding list.

Important Artifacts is a book about the ghosts that live in things. Specifically, it chronicles a four-year relationship between two fairly average people, albeit with above-average taste—Leanne Shapton, a 30-something New York Times food writer, and Harold “Hal” Adams, a wealthy wedding photographer in his late 30s through his 40s, nervous, a creep show, homemade gifts, and other details of a couple’s everyday life together. Leanne is clever, nervous and awkward (see her here in one photo-die from Hal’s camera as a leanne still). Hal is romantic and naive, he (as you would say) lies in the margins of his books. They’ve played into photography Toronto novelist Sheila Heti and New York graphic designer Brad Schick, both friends of Shapton’s, who were paid in artwork



THE BOOK CREATED FRACTION IN HER OWN RELATIONSHIP: I’M KEEP ALL THESE REMNANTS FROM OLD LOVE AFFAIRS. AND I WOULD MORN.

time together—we are invited to infer the story of what drew them together, and what ultimately soured their apart.

Shapton’s suspicion came from a 2004 auction catalogue of the personal belongings of Thomas Capote, who died in 1964. Shapton couldn’t help but seeing the photos and descriptions of the items on offer as an alien story in the form of cold, hard evidence. She decided to use the same device to tell a story about something else that lives and dies. “Love has a lifespan,” she says. “Love does die the way a person dies. I liked looking at it like a death.” The book is like an autopsy

Although the love story is contemporary (the fictional couple meet in 2002), what’s left behind feels old, worn and dusty. In part, this is because Leanne and Hal happen to be collectors of vintage everything, from books and travel guides to foundational garments. In part, it’s because ephemera included in black and white inevitably feel a little dusty and water-colored. The effect, a timeless one, serves as a reminder that there is a transience to the way love unfolds: the early patch-drunk days (see postcards from late 18th-century comfortable slipperphone [for 177 homemade goeters, labeled “Tidings of Comfort and Joy, Given from Hal and Leanne”]; and two others, the power point, where even herby cards are labeled with resignation [for 13]). “We both read time.”

Each line is photographed and detailed in a manner that is unemotionally cold and clinical, and it’s from this contrast—the objects’ stark everydayness, their nothing-questions, that mark against their significance as defined by the reader—that *Important Artifacts* gains its poignancy. Let 1021, for instance, is described as “A Polaroid photograph of Leanne in a cocktail dress. A Post-it note affixed to the back reads ‘I had to buy a new dress this week really (for the Christmas party)—what little joy!’” (p. 134 & p. 200-20). “A paper crane from the Oyster Bar restaurant, folded into a fortune teller poem: ‘15-30-30.’” The idea is that when you remove a cold emotion from a love story, it can actually be more affecting. Says Shapton, “because when there’s a lack of emotion makes you feel, people read between the lines and relate it to their own lives.”

Shapton, who grew up in Mississauga, Ont., first met critical acclaim as an author with her 2006 book, *Was She Pretty*, which had found a combination of true drawings, stories



LOVE LOST: The book, presented as an auction catalogue, compiles some 500 lists of objects from the personal life of Hal and Leanne

and poetic musings about the uncertainties women often project onto their boyfriends’ as girlfriends. She was a love in the art and design community before that. Straight out of school—New York’s Pratt Institute—she was awarded a series of prestigious prizes (she landed her job at directing the award-winning *American Place* of the *National Post* in Toronto, and then as art director for *Saturday Night* magazine, where she showed a new generation of illustrators. Her own illustrations have appeared in *New York magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *Harper’s*, and on the cover of *Sheila Heti* has designed a poster for the film of director Noah Baumbach (*The Squid and the Whale*) and the movie of Chuck Palahniuk (*Invisible Man* and *Diesel*). In New York, she started her own art-focused book publishing company, J. L. Books, with photographer Jerry Folick.

Like *Was She Pretty*, Shapton’s new book was born of her own need to rethink the past. At the time, she was in the process of moving in with her long-term boyfriend, now Harold, James Thurman. (A British transplant in New York, Thurman is a media planner in his own right—the former editorial director of *Condé Nast*, under S.I. Newhouse. He recently quit after many calls the same note job to work in 2005 and moved to Spain for a time with Shapton. The couple eventually returned to New York.) Sorting through her belongings, Shapton found herself disoriented by nostalgia. “I do have that problem in that I keep a lot of stuff,” she said. “I keep all of these memories from past love affairs and now I’m attached and I needed to do some thing about this because I would look back and go, ‘Ain’t I still in love with this person?’ But as I’m doing, moving over this thing.” And I would miss.”

In fact, many of the items featured in the book belong to Shapton—things given to her by Thurman on a same case, such as “The dogs on page 36,” she says. “There are me and [James].” The objects are all her. The weird

about that Hal says Leanne: that’s something that I received from a boyfriend. I was given a bottle of Colson Edge (page 70) for Valentine’s Day once, but never a whole case. So there are these little notes of autobiography.”

Eventually, the book created fiction in her own relationship. “It changed everything up,” she says. “And then I got a wedding to finish it so I pulled away even further and my boyfriend was like, ‘We’re going to break up because of this book.’ I was really speaking a lot of time in the past, reminding diaries and love letters from these important relationships in my life—that’s not a good sign. But I would need them to finish. ‘Ain’t I still in love, what does a sound like? Are you still shy? Or at least 10?’” Four years changed something the more time you spend with somebody I think my boyfriend was just pulling his eyes going, ‘Oh no, there it comes. I can’t miss up again to these things.’”

And then out, the album of the past doesn’t hold under intense scrutiny. Writing the book was like a purging process for Shapton. “I just sort of washed it right up and said, ‘I’m finished with my past love life,’” she says. “When you admit it, you do get a little sick of it, and I could kind of call it a step back and say I’ve really equated myself to a drawer rather than have it on a shelf. I drew some stuff away but I still didn’t throw everything away.” Shapton and Thurman plan to go on a tour of their story in a small, personal ceremony.

Meanwhile, almost as soon as the first copy of the book was dispatched, Shapton began receiving a rash from people wondering who was handling the film rights. “I for-

warded them all to my agent,” she says, “and he said there’s been enough interest that we should probably take this to one of the agencies in L.A., like CAA. They took it and sent it out pretty quickly but got a few big responses.” (Shapton declined to identify the other bidders, but according to her publicist, among those who “expressed interest” were Sarah Jessica Parker, Jennifer Aniston, and Jack Black.) Within 10 days, a deal was struck with Putnam/Putnam and Plan B, Brad Pitt’s production company. Putnam and Portman are slated for the film rights.

“It’s funny that it might go further,” says Shapton. “Was the *Pratt* didn’t do very well and so I expected this to fare as well, if not worse. I thought it was a wonder also. So it’s nice to have that be rewarded.” Adopting an auction catalogue to tell a love story, though. For this reason, she decided to relinquish creative control. “I don’t know how they’re going to do it. It’s going to be a complete challenge. But the thing is, that’s how the book works. I didn’t know if it would work, if I could tell a coherent love story, or if I think it’s something that they’re willing to go on something that they don’t know how to make. I think that’s actually kind of a good, brave artistic sign.”

Even if it never gets to be another scholarly Hollywood rom-com, it’s ready for it. “It’s flown the coop,” she says. “If that’s how it goes, the more it’s how it goes. I can’t have any other outside about it or else it would be courted heartbreak. Of course the reader won’t be to say, ‘How terrible—but it would actually be sort of funny.’”

NOW SHOWING... THE IRISH PRIME MINISTER

An anonymous artist recently hung two paintings, one in Canada’s Royal Ontario Museum and one in the National Gallery. Each depicts the nation’s party prime minister, Brian Cowen. In the middle, in Cowen’s own hand, is a pair of antlers. In the other he is parked in a chair. Officials at both galleries announced the unwanted paintings as soon as they discovered them.





HOTT IMPROVED **KATIE HOLMES**
The happenin'-lookin' Mrs. Cruise is looking better, well it only took \$54,000 for a premiere of Tom Cruise's new film, *Mollwey*, she spent \$1,800 on hair extensions, \$16,000 on dental work and \$1,800 on makeup and other innovations. Recently Holmes has looked gaunt, the rumored result of a detoxification regimen dictated by Scientologists. Said one observer of the new Katie "She had the body of a supermodel!"



PERFORMANCE
Large can be in charge of Charles' dances
says that to go in.
She formed the
people. The har-
ing the spirit's

That's why a lot of TV people may be looking seriously into *Jeopardy!* As it succeeds, it will undermine the idea that there shouldn't be a barrier between commercial theater and commercial television. Before *Jeopardy!* was started, producer Bill Huber told syndicated columnist LA Senz that he'd received a letter from Susan Harris, creator of *The Golden Girls*, saying she was impressed with *Jeopardy!* playing. He clearly has other actors people rooting for him. And if it doesn't work out, there's no shame in being remembered for bringing us *Jeopardy!* *(TV-14)*

Large cast be grateful: The Overweight Troupe is a company of Chinese dancers—10 women and four men—with an average weight of nearly 260 lb. Their leader, Jie Fei (pronounced "feyoo"), says that to join, candidate performers must be at least 220 lb. She formed the troupe to overcome public ridicule of heavy people. The hardest part of their routines, she says, is maintaining the splits and flexions in mid-air.

FLORA JEAN BOYNTON

1927-2009

The 'Matriarch of Nobleton' came from a monarchist background and presided over Victoria Day

Flora Jean Boynton was born on Oct. 26, 1927, to Gordon and Jennie "Mae" McGilroy, farmers in Kienburg, Ont., a village located about 45 km north of Toronto. The second of three girls, she was raised in a monarchist family in which the Presbyterian Church figured prominently and the concept of "king and country" still resonated. Jean, as she was known, was a chubby baby with big brown eyes, who "sailed the show," says younger sister Ruth. As a child, digestive problems often landed her in a hammock for five or six months, but she remained "a sunny lad" who rarely complained, says Ruth.

During the Great Depression, farm hands were in January, and during the Second World War they were scarce, so the girls were depended upon to help. Jean "enjoyed working outdoors," but Ruth recalls the pair of them, endearing girls, "hoping for rain so we could stop." Church was the source of both spiritual and musical inspiration. Jean learned to play the organ, and, as tenor, the sister/sister school group, in which when they sang religious songs. Though Jean "struggled a bit with school, she had her dignity," says Ruth. Without regular transportation, the girls boarded in nearby Windsor during high school, where Jean can be traced until Grade 11. Like her father, she was drawn to country music groups. Through her involvement with the Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario, she met Carl Boynton, 15, five years' with a keen sense of humour, says Ruth. In 1946, they were married, and after a few years on Carl's family farm in Woodbridge, they settled in Nobleton.

Residing in King Township, an area settled in the 1790s by United Empire Loyalists from the U.S., Nobleton was home to about 1,800 when the Boyntons arrived. Their dairy farm, located on Highway 27 north of King Street, became "part of the landscape of Nobleton," says friend Nancy Hapke. By 1961, the couple had four sons—Nick, Ross, Scott and Lawrence—whose locals knew as "the Boynton boys." Jean sang in the church choir and became a prominent member of the Woman's Institute and the United Church Women.

Her life was gruffing, but Jean and Carl were "a super couple" who always remained upbeat, says Scott. Not inclined to "open affection," their bond was apparent "by the way they looked at each other," he says. In 1975, Carl developed flu-like symptoms. By the

time he was diagnosed with cancer, it was too late. Though Jean "never got over [his passing]," says Scott, she drew strength from her sons—known thereafter as "Jean's boys." They sold the milk cows but kept the farm, which later became a successful old business.

Jean's community involvement and family, which grew to include grandchildren and great-grandchildren, kept her busy. Having moved into town after Carl died, she began her tenure as crossing guard for Nobleton/Jones Public School in 1983. Jean continued herself in the children, who called her "Grandma Boynton." Says Scott, "People didn't know me in town, but they knew my mother." Grandson Nick Boynton, who played in the NHL, was a particular source of pride. Jean watched every game, and kept up to date on the family team, "so she could be authoritative" in conversations at Tim Hortons, where the regularly held court, says Scott.

Widely regarded as the "Matriarch of Nobleton," honoree consultant Jeff Leacock, who was a natural choice to play Queen Victoria in the annual Victoria Day parade. Lynda Rogers, who came up with the idea in 2004, followed a period costume, a black dress pulled out with emblems, and a matching jacket and gloves. (Victoria never recovered from her husband's death in 1961, and wore the funeral hat for her remaining 40 years.) The complicated rigging took two people to put on. "We could understand why [Victoria] had to have a maid and a lady in waiting," says Lynda, but Jean was always a good sport. As Victoria she stood stiffly in a black hat around her short hair, and seemed to be moved from the back of a convertible. At the celebration that followed, Jean helped her mother out the color, and posed for photos with the kids. Says Jeff, "It was a very fitting role for her."

In 2004, Jean moved into a retirement home. "She knew all the women who lived there," says Scott. Before long, she had succeeded fully in replacing the tattered Canada flag on the front lawn. Though she walked with a cane, Jean was in good health, and kept driving until this past winter. In March, she came down with what appeared to be flu, but was actually a virus in her small intestine. A few days after an appointment to repair it, her condition deteriorated. On March 11, the Matriarch of Nobleton died. Jean Boynton was 81; the same age as Queen Victoria when she passed away.

BY RACHEL MCNEILSON



1927-2009

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